OUR NEW £1,000 PRIZE. £25 FOR NEWSAGENTS AND BOOKSTALL CLERKS.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 532. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 11TH, 1899. [ONE PENNY.

Digitized by Google

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

COFFEE WITHOUT DREGS.

GOOD! ITS MASON'S

An agreeable, stimulating and sustaining beverage. Instantly prepared and most economical. Equal to the very finest coffee. Highly recommended by the Medical Profession.

Of all Grocers and Stores, or a Sample Bottle post free for 9 stamps.

ALSO TRY

MASON'S WINE ESSENCES

AND

MASON'S EXTRACT OF HERBS.

Sample Bottle of either sent free for 9d.; two assorted 1/3 three assorted 1/8.

Agents Wanted.

Manufacturers—

NEWBALL & MASON, NOTTINGHAM.

"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation, Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

SALE NOW OVER SIX MILLIONS YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

GOOD FELT HAT, Black, Navy, Brown or Grey **2/6.** Carriage 4d.

THE John Noble

HALF-GUINEA COSTUMES

promptly sent by Parcel Post, safely packed, direct from the Largest Firm of Costumiers in the World, and made to look smart and yield faithful service.

TRIMMED HAT, as sketch, **5/11.** Carriage 4d.

Model 984.

Exceedingly well-made and carefully finished Chesterfield Coat, and full-wide Tailor Skirt. Price complete Costume, 10/6; carriage 6d. Skirt alone, **10/6** 5/6; carriage 5d. Good value.

Stylish blouse bodice and neat skirt. Bodice lined through, and made with prettily gathered front and shaped belt, *as sketch*. Lengths and Prices: **6/11** 35 38 42 46 in. **7/11 8/11 9/11 ea.** } Carriage 5d. extra.

Lengths are from top of neckband to bottom of skirt in front.

PRETTY MAID'S COSTUME Model 1016.

These Costumes are supplied in the following two good durable Cloths:
I. **John Noble Cheviot Serge,** weighty and weather-resisting.
II. **John Noble Costume Coating,** smooth-surfaced and of medium weight

PATTERNS SENT POST FREE,

together with the Illustrated Annual Sale List. Please mention *Short Stories* when writing.

A FULL DRESS LENGTH of either cloth (6yd. 52in. wide) for 7/6. Carriage 8d. **7/6**

COLOURS of all Costumes are Black, Navy, Electric, Brown, Ruby, Myrtle, Fawn, Grey, Moss, Sage Green, and Purple.

THE THREE SIZES IN STOCK are 34, 36, and 38 in. round bust (under arms). Waists 24, 26, 28 in.; Skirts being 38, 40, and 42 in. long in front.

Any other size can be specially made to measure 1/6 extra.

BANKERS: "London City & Midland Bank Ltd." Please name **"Short Stories"** when writing to

JOHN NOBLE LTD., Brook St. Mills, **MANCHESTER.**

You will be pleased with CHANCELLOR SOAPS.

That's why we want **YOU** to try them. As First Prize we offer a **£300 HOUSE,** and hundreds of other prizes. By using Chancellor Soaps and saving your wrappers till **June** you get the best and cheapest Soaps extant, you **may get** the House or a 50 guinea Piano, you **will probably get** a splendid Lady's Silver Watch, or if not you **must get** a money Prize.

Every Competitor gets one.

GET A BAR TO-DAY!

Won't You?

Send 4d. for Sample Bar

GIVEN AWAY

HUNDREDS OF POUNDS IN PRIZES - EVERY COMPETITOR GETS ONE OR A £300 HOUSE

LIBERAL PAYMENT FOR WRAPPERS. PARTICULARS WITH EACH 2½d AND 3d BAR.

CHANCELLOR SOAPS

to 13 Clerkenwell Road, London.

SHORT STORIES

No. 532. ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending March 11th, 1899.

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON

Jean Barlow's Story.

"EXTRA special!" The words were bawled in my ear as I was hurrying into Charing Cross Station with just three minutes to spare before the train for Wrexley started.

Still, I wanted an evening paper, so seized one, fumbled for and found a copper, then dashed on to the platform and jumped into my train, only just in time, as it began to move a minute afterwards.

The compartment was "3rd class," and there was one other occupant, a man.

I began to read my paper. I had been staying in Scotland, in the extreme north, for a fortnight, where news got stale before it reached me, so I quite enjoyed the knowledge that I held in my hands the *latest* news of the day. I glanced over the "House" column, read the Foreign intelligence, skimmed a "leader,"—then—the name of my own village caught my eye—it was in a heading:

"Dreadful murder at Wrexley," and the paragraph below ran as follows:

The list of murderers, men and women is, alas! a long one, but in this instance the case is peculiarly shocking, as the accused, by name Jean Barlow, is only aged eighteen.

It appears that, on Sunday the 8th, James Brown, carter, was found lying dead in a lane near Wrexley. There were signs of violence on his body, but death had been caused by a heavy blow from some instrument which had such force as to kill him instantaneously. The police were very much puzzled at first, but afterwards, a heavy, knobbed stick with a leaden top was found close to the scene of the murder.

Beside the murdered man stood Jean Barlow (now in custody).

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

Her limbs had evidently become partially paralysed with terror and had refused to carry her from the spot where lay the victim of her crime.

When she was taken into custody, the girl said nothing, when questioned, refused to answer—and we are informed that no word of any kind has passed her lips since she was found standing beside the dead man clutching (of all things!) a prayer-book.

Inside this book, on the fly-leaf was written: "To my sweetheart Jean from Jack Reynolds."

The book gives no clue, as it belongs to Jean Barlow herself, and she was engaged to the above-mentioned Jack Reynolds. The only difficulty is, how could a girl (slender and of medium height as she is described to be) attack and kill a big man.

The police answer this, by saying that James Brown was *struck from behind*—and that the marks on his body may have been the results of some other fight, as James Brown was rather addicted to pugilistic exercise.

The stick which had been found belonged (so four different witnesses allege) to Jean Barlow's father, long since dead. So far, the evidence seems very much against the opinion held by a small number of persons, namely that Jean Barlow was not the criminal.

However, in a day or two, there will doubtless be further developments.

As I came to the end of this paragraph, the paper dropped from my hand.

"Little Jean Barlow! Good Heavens! Our old gardener's orphan daughter! Impossible!"

So ran my thoughts.

I turned away from the passing landscape which seemed at that moment only a series of blurred, meaningless views—and noticed that the man who sat opposite me was regarding me fixedly.

"I dare say you have seen the case of Jean Barlow?" he queried; "no wonder you are shocked! It is a terrible thing that one so young——"

"It is an infernal lie," I said hotly. "Jean Barlow lives in my own village, at Wrexley, and a sweeter, more gentle, more womanly woman never lived!"

"*Hum*," said the stranger; "such assertions won't count for much in the evidence, I don't think."

There was a covert sneer in his voice which I strongly resented.

"What interest have you in the matter?" I asked sharply.

"None very special," he said calmly; "only I happen to be her brother."

"Merciful Providence!" I ejaculated. "Her *brother*! Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself for even suspecting her to be capable of such a deed!"

"Ought I?" he asked lightly.

"Time will show. Opinions differ; I stick to my own."

"It is a false one," I said violently.

"Perhaps so," he returned in a slow, drawling voice, enough to exasperate anyone in itself.

"As you have put the question to me," he said, "I suppose I have an equal right to ask *you* why you take such an interest in this case?"

"Certainly," I said shortly. "Jean Barlow's mother was a very faithful servant to my mother, and we have always taken a deep interest in her children, left orphans at a very early age—I presume that you are the half-brother of whom I have sometimes heard Jean speak, the son of Barlow's first wife?"

"Just so—and I am now on my way to Wrexley to investigate this matter—I suppose I am speaking to the young Squire—to Mr. Lynton?"

"That is my name," I told him, "and I am glad to hear that you are going to 'investigate' things at Wrexley, for I am one of those people who believe that 'truth will out,' and so, in your 'investigations' you will probably find that Jean is not guilty."

To my surprise, the man Barlow suddenly held out his hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Lynton," he said in a moved voice (how different from his former tone I can hardly describe). "Thank you, in Jean's name and my own. It is true I am only her half-brother, but I love the child—I was only trying you, to see on whose side you were—I have an intimate conviction that you are worthy of trust (Heaven grant that I am right!)—and so I am going to confide in you, a thing I rarely do to anyone—man or woman.

"But in this case you may be able to help me, as your father is a man 'having authority' where prisons are concerned, and I may require some 'red-tape' in the way of permissions in my work.

"I must first tell you that I am a detective by profession and my chief has given me this task *as a special favour!* (The irony of Life!)—He noticed the coincidence of my name being the same as 'the accused' with a smile and a joke, for he has not the least idea that 'Jean Barlow' and 'Paul Barlow detective' are in any way connected, and I thought it better not to mention that fact. I am now going to Wrexley, to see if I can extract any information from those dunderheads the Fellings (cousins to Jean) who were always hanging about the cottage where she lived with old Aunt Maggie (you know them sir?)."

"Yes, I do," I replied, "and I can tell you something else, and that is that Jack Reynolds, Jean's *fiancé*, is the best fellow who ever stepped, and that James Brown (a disappointed suitor) was furiously jealous, and would have given worlds to have stood in the other man's shoes."

"Ah!" said Barlow thoughtfully, "that is something to know. Jean didn't tell me these things. She is a shy lassie, and was doubtless afraid of being teased. Have those two ever had words?"

"Often," I said, "to Jean's extreme discomfort—but she patched up a kind of truce between them the very day before James Brown was murdered. I was at home, I remember, some weeks back, and she passed me in a lane—I stopped and talked to her for a while, and asked her how she kept the turbulent pair in order! My mother and I were laughing about it afterwards, and the other day she wrote to me (her letter was dated Saturday the 7th), and she told me, amongst other items of local news and gossip:

"'I have just seen pretty Jean Barlow; she tells me that she has bound James Brown by a bribe to keep the peace and that she felt like a bone between two dogs! I tell you this as I know how amused you have been over this village comedy!'"

"Did she tell you what that bribe was?" Barlow queried.

I shook my head.

"That is a pity," he remarked, "because (you mark my words, sir) that bribe was the cause, I don't doubt, of a fresh quarrel. The murder took place on a Sunday—the *quarrel was over a prayer-book.*"

I gasped. "Over a *prayer-book!*" I repeated. "But it was *Jean's* prayer-book, given her by Jack Reynolds."

"Precisely. Had it been anybody else's prayer-book it wouldn't have been any clue in this instance."

"I give it up," I said. "I'm not a detective. But, one thing I do beg of you, and that is, that you will come and tell me of any further developments, and, if I can be of any use, I hope you know that you can rely upon me."

"I will certainly, and thank you, sir, very much. I have a plan in my head," he added, "and if I can't find

Digitized by Google

out anything at Wrexley, I am going to try and see Jean in prison—there is where I shall want your help."

"And then?" I asked him.

"I will do a thing which goes sorely against the grain with me," Barlow said slowly, "but her life hangs in the balance, and it is a life which is a very precious one to me. My plan is this: To get Jean to confide in me—by promising secrecy—with a mental reservation to the effect that such a promise shall not be kept (unless her confession implicates herself, which Heaven forbid!)."

I shifted uncomfortably in my corner.

"It's an awfully underhand way of proceeding," I grumbled.

"Tell me a better plan," he said sharply, "and I will undertake to carry it out." At which I was silent.

After all, I thought, detectives' work is never above board, it can't be, or in nine cases out of ten, criminals would escape the law—so——"Do as you think best," I said resignedly.

Just then the train stopped at a small station. In got a woman and a boy.

The woman had an evening paper in her hand, and was very red in the face.

"The h'dea!" she said, "of hour Jean a-doin' such a thing!" (addressing the boy indignantly). "She who's 'ardly strong enough to do the 'ouse-work up at Maggie's, let alone knock big hulking fellows down like James Brown! The perlice 'ave just gone stark staring mad, that's wot it is doin'."

"I s'pects so," was Tom's laconic reply. He was evidently too sleepy to pay much attention.

I looked at Barlow.

"What she says is only common-sense," I said in a low voice.

"Of course," was his answer. "But time will show."

* * * * *

Paul Barlow is interviewing his sister in the prison to-day. So much I know, having obtained the order for him to see her. Afterwards he is to come and tell me with what results.

* * * * *

"Mr. Lionel to see you, sir," announced the butler.

By some intuition I knew that "Mr. Lionel" was Paul Barlow.

"Show him in here," I said (I was in my own "den"), "and Bennett——"

"Yes, sir."

"I don't wish to be disturbed while he is here."

"Very good, sir."

And Bennett departed to return presently and usher in Barlow.

We shook hands, but I waited until the door was shut to ask eagerly:

"Well, what news?"

Barlow's face was very white.

"Jean did not do it—I need hardly say that to you—but she knows who *did* and will not say."

"She will not say!" I exclaimed.

"Then it can be only one person——"

"A girl will not lightly contemplate hanging—unless for somebody's sake who is, to her, dearer than life."

"You are right—the man who did the deed can be no other than Jack Reynolds," Barlow said quickly; "but we have no data to go on—though I have constructed a theory of my own.

"It is this, that Jean gave, or rather lent her prayer-book—(the one given her by Jack Reynolds)—to James Brown, on condition of 'keeping the peace'—(you know what trifles are prized by men in love)—James Brown took it, but broke his word and flourished it in his rival's face on Sunday, when they met in that quiet lane where the murdered man was found. Jean doubtless snatched it from his hands.

"Jack began to upbraid her with being false to him—(you know how reason goes with men in love!)—James lost his temper and struck him—a fight ensued, and at last, Jack Reynolds picked up 'old' Barlow's (my father's) stick, and having grasped it by the wrong end, dealt James Brown that fatal blow.

"The stick was a queer-looking thing, just the kind to take a young man's fancy, and so, probably, Jean had given it to him.

"Seeing what he had done, Jack Reynolds took to flight, leaving Jean standing there, paralysed with fear horror and fright."

"Your theory is a very ingenious explanation of the mystery," I said, "but—I wish you could fit your saddle to some other horse. Do you think Jean will thank you for taking the rope from round her neck to fix it round that of her lover?"

"Bah," said Paul Barlow. "She can get another soon enough."

But I could see he did not mean what he said.

"You don't know women," was all I said.

"And do you profess to be a judge?" he asked smiling.

"No," I said quietly, "but it would take a cleverer man than either you or I, Barlow, to guage the height and the depth of a good woman's love and devotion."

His keen eyes softened.

"She is a good woman if there ever was one. The steadfast look in her eyes I can never for get when she said to me:

"'Don't fret about me Paul. We are all in God's hands. He who takes note of a humble sparrow falling to the ground, will not desert me in my hour of need. I have absolutely no fear—I trust in Him so utterly.'

"They were her last words to me—I wish I had her faith."

"I wish you had," I said gravely. "It is a gift we cannot value too highly."

After some more talk, Paul Barlow went away, and I did not see him again until the day of Jean's trial.

* * * * *

The Court was crowded.

The case promised to be one of great interest.

I made a point of being there.

I was painfully anxious to hear the trial to the end—above all, the verdict. I could see Jean's face clearly.

She was very pale—but her big blue eyes shone with so calm and steadfast a light that, to look at her, gave me a curious feeling of awe. The case proceeded.

As one witness after another was called up and gave their evidence, I could see plainly that it was all going dead against the prisoner.

Already, I seemed to see the judge putting on his black cap, already seemed to hear the ominous words which pronounce the murderer's sentence: "that she would be hanged by the neck till she be dead."

At last it drew towards its close—the judge was preparing to address the Jury before they retired, to issue forth presently with the words "Guilty," or "Not Guilty"—words on which a life depended—when suddenly, there was a disturbance in the outer court.

"Let me pass!" a shrill voice cried, and presently a tall thin old woman was led in by a policeman.

Digitized by Google

"She says she has important evidence to give, my Lord, bearing on this case," was his brief, business-like announcement.

The old woman was conducted to the witness-box, and duly swore in to speak "the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth."

There was perfect silence in the crowded court, unbroken even by the voice of the new witness for a moment.

She looked round.

Presently her eyes fell on Jean, standing pale but steadfast against the prisoner's bar.

"She is not guilty," the new witness said. "And, had I known that any human creature had been blamed for James Brown's murder she would not be standing there now. The murderer of James Brown,—sir,—was——"

She paused, and the pause was breathless—"Henry Webber, my idiot son."

A great murmering of relief, excitement, and what not, passed through the crowd like a wave, then there was once more silence, and the poor mother resumed her narrative. "On Sunday, the 8th, my son Henry was very restless, he went down to Maggie Barlow's cottage and stole a stick there which used to belong to Jean's father. He told me that he had taken it, because he wished to kill James Brown who had mocked him the day before, being silly with too much drink, I paid no heed to his words, he being weak in his head and for ever talking nonsense. But, on coming home from morning service, I heard sounds of fighting, and going into the lane from where those sounds came, I was just in time to see my boy, in a fit of mad fury, strike the blow which gave James Brown his death.

"I hurried forward, seized Henry by the arm, flung the stick away and led him home. Next morning, all remembrance of the scene had vanished from his brain. (He is weak in his head, sir, as I said before.)

"And I—how could I tell?—put the rope round the neck of my own son! So I took him away to a little place where I have a brother farming, intending to keep quiet until this had all blown over. But, yesterday, a newspaper arrived, it had been used to wrap a piece of bacon in—I smoothed it out to read it, and came upon the account of Jean's trial—and how, it was more than likely she'd be hanged. Sir—I could not, even to save my boy, allow so great a wrong. I have no more to say."

From my corner, I was watching Jean's sweet face, and I saw her expression change from relief to gladness, from gladness to surprise, then, her hands were clasped, and I knew, without words, that she was thanking God for having so rewarded her trust.

The Judge spoke gently to the witness. "The crimes of those afflicted with insanity," he said, "are not treated like those who are in full possession of their minds. Your son is no longer in a fit state to be at large. His case must be looked into by the doctors—and, if it is proved that he is of unsound mind, he will be placed under confinement. This is only just and necessary."

He said no more, and Mrs. Webber came out of the witness-box crying.

My heart bled for her—I knew her well. She was the wife of the village attorney, a highly respectable, superior woman.

At last, all was over—and Jean, our little Jean, was free. She herself, when somewhat recovered from all she had gone through, gave me an account of her behaviour, and of the awful fears she had entertained.

It appeared that the "bribe" she had given James Brown was the loan of her prayer-book. He had promised her jokingly "to come to Church and forgive his enemies" if she acceded to his request, which was the loan of the afore-mentioned book.

She had barely got home from the morning service, when one of her cousins ran into her calling out:

"Run Jean, run, Jem Brown and Jack have come to blows."

The boy has since confessed that he only did this to get a "rise" out of her.

Jean ran—retracing her steps towards the Church, and found James Brown lying dead beside the ditch—her prayer-book lying close by.

She picked it up mechanically and was still standing, rooted to the spot with horror, when two mounted police happened to ride by.

The rest of the story is known—except that Jean, when she heard about the leaden-topped stick, made up her mind that it was Jack Reynolds who had done the deed. He had admired the stick the day before, and she had told him he should have it for his own if he would come to fetch it on Sunday.

Seeing it gone from its accustomed place on her return from Church, she concluded that he had been in to fetch it, and wondered why he had not waited to see her when she came home from church as he usually did. Then came the foolish boy's fib—which roused her worst fears—and, when she found James Brown lying dead, she made up her mind that Jack Reynolds, in a fit of passion, had killed him.

So that her feelings of surprise, relief, and gladness, on hearing that the murder was done by Mrs. Webber's idiot son, can hardly be described.

Before that, she had fully made up her mind to bear the full brunt of the accusation until the end, even it she had to lay down her life to save Jack Reynolds.

"Jean is *more* than a woman!" I ejaculated, admiringly. But Paul Barlow shook his head.

"She is *only* a woman," he affirmed, "but a woman of the stamp men love and honour still when their beauty fades and old age robs them of outward charms, a woman who is not ashamed to exercise a woman's highest privilege"

"And that is?" I queried.

"To love," he answered, "and love divinely."

So I will end, having no more to say, but I had to write down what I knew of Jean Barlow's story.

Constance Craigie Halkett.

Digitized by Google

- A PRIZE OF -

£1,000 FOR A "S.S." READER.

£1,000 £1,000

£25 FOR A NEWSAGENT! £50 FOR WITNESSES!

- - MAKING A TOTAL OF £1,075! - -

THE BIGGEST PRIZE EVER OFFERED FOR SO SIMPLE A TASK.

TO win this substantial sum of money, all you have to do is to fill up the coupon below, giving in the proper place the number of births and the number of deaths which will occur in the thirty-three great towns in the United Kingdom for the week ending April 22nd, 1899.

Then write down your name and address, and ask five of your friends to write their names and addresses in the spaces provided. Any coupon not bearing these names will be disqualified.

Also ask the newsagent or bookstall clerk, from whom you obtained this copy of "S.S." to insert his name and address in the space provided. Although such a course is obviously to his advantage, it is not compulsory for the coupon to bear his signature.

Witnesses, newsagents, and bookstall clerks may sign any number of coupons, and competitors may sign each other's as witnesses.

To the person whose attempt is correct we will pay the sum of **£1,000.**

To the newsagent or bookstall clerk whose name appears on the winning coupon we will pay the sum of **£25,** and **£5** to each of the boys attached to the bookstall from which the paper was bought.

To each of the witnesses whose names appear on the winning coupon we will pay the sum of **£10.**

As a guide to your estimate we give below the number of Births and Deaths which have taken place in the thirty-three largest towns in the United Kingdom for the corresponding period for the past three years.

The figures as published by the Registrar-General will be taken as correct. On December 2nd, 1898, a competition similar to this was declared legal by the Appeal Court.

Registered during the Week Ending April 25th, 1896.		Registered during the Week Ending April 24th, 1897.		Registered during the Week Ending April 23rd, 1898.	
Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.	Births.	Deaths.
6,783	4,062	6,226	3,965	7,202	3,905

If no competitor estimates the correct number of births and deaths, the £1,000 will be awarded to the individual whose forecast is most nearly correct.

In the event of two or more persons being correct, the £1,000 will be divided amongst them. This condition applies also to the £25 for the newsagent or bookstall clerk, the £5 for the boys, and £10 for each of the persons who sign the winning coupons.

One competitor may send in any number of attempts, but each coupon must be signed by five persons under the conditions mentioned above.

It must be clearly understood that all persons who enter for this competition must abide by the decision of the Editor in any question that may arise in connection with the competition.

All attempts to be addressed to the Editor, Short Stories, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and the envelope to be marked in the left-hand corner with the word: "Births."

THE COMPETITION CLOSES ON MONDAY, APRIL 17th.

My estimate is { *Births* ..... / *Deaths* ..... } *Write in large figures.*

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Signatures of five people:

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....

Newsagent or Bookstall Clerk * .....

.....

* If a bookstall clerk the name of the station will be sufficient.

THIS PRIZE IS OFFERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH "PEARSON'S WEEKLY," "HOME NOTES," "SUNDAY READER," "BIG BUDGET," "PICK-ME-UP," AND "PASTIMES."

Digitized by Google

OUR ATTENTIVE WAITER.

In the first place, I wish it distinctly understood that my hair is *not* red.

Flo insists that it is, and takes a wicked delight in calling me "Carrots" whenever there is anyone to hear her. But when a girl has verses made in honour of her locks which describes them as:

Ambrosial masses, bronze-hued in the shade,
But burning with the glimmer of deal gold where sunlight falls,

I think she is fully justified in calling her hair *auburn*, and in defending it against sarcastic attacks.

Yet, after she has passed thirty by several years, I presume that such vanities become ridiculous; they should be laid away somewhere, in a little box, with the fan and faded roses of her first ball and other cherished mementoes of her past girlhood, to be taken out and looked over only in secret, on a rainy afternoon, when she is in the mood for memories—and tears.

It was five years ago that Flo and I did Switzerland, with Aunt Mary for chaperon, and when sight-seeing had been pushed to the utmost limit of human endurance Aunt Mary gave out, and said she must go and rest for a time where there were no mountains that must be climbed and no mules to be ridden.

So we settled upon Interlaken, and decided to make it our headquarters for a fortnight's stay.

The evening we arrived it poured in torrents, and when we reached the landing at Interlaken we made a rush for the first omnibus that looked inviting and were driven at once to the Hotel de l'Imperatrice Victoria.

It was half-past nine next morning before we were ready for *petit déjeuner*, served in the dining-room, where we were almost the only guests, the others having started on their rounds.

We therefore monopolised the entire attention of our waiter, and as he moved noiselessly about, serving us with that quick intuition of our wishes that marks perfect training, I could not but observe what a remarkably refined-looking man he was.

Tall, straight, with light moustache and hair that stood up from his forehead, he had quite the appearance of "the distinguished foreigner." He spoke English fluently, though with a slight French accent, and answered with the utmost intelligence and politeness all the questions that we put to him in regard to Interlaken and its surroundings.

When we rose to leave the table he drew our chairs away and preceded us to door, which he flung open, standing aside for us to pass with a bow that would have done credit to a courtier.

I felt rather than saw that his quick, bright eyes were fixed upon us and that he was regarding me particularly —but there was nothing impertinent in his gaze.

While Flo and Aunt Mary went upstairs for their hats and sunshades, preparatory to a stroll among the shops, I sauntered out upon the broad lawn, when a voice behind me said, politely:

"Your pardon, mademoiselle, but I think you left this in the dining-room."

Turning, I beheld our waiter holding in his outstretched arms my white woollen shawl, which I now remembered having tossed into the chair next to mine when I entered the room.

"Oh, thank you very much," I said; I was about to take it from him when, with a quick movement, he flung it lightly about my shoulders.

"The mornings are cool; I feared you might need it, mademoiselle, and so took the liberty of bringing it to you. Again I ask your pardon." He bowed respectively and withdrew.

While he spoke, his nervous eyes had rested with a most peculiar expression upon my face; but in spite of the familiarity of his action, his manner had been perfectly deferential. I gazed after him in blank surprise, scarcely knowing whether to be annoyed or amused; and just then Flo and Aunt Mary came down, ready for their walk, and we set out.

We were charmed with Interlaken, with the situation, with the scenery, with the people. We were as comfortable as possible. Our hotel was a model one. But I think that which more than all contributed to the enjoyment of our stay was the attention of Carl, our waiter.

From that first morning, he had, as it were, taken us under his special protection and left nothing undone that could add to our comfort.

He was quick to see what was needed, so solicitous of our welfare, and yet, with it all, so perfectly respectful that it was a pleasure to have him about.

Sometimes, indeed, it struck me that he was a little more attentive to *my* wants than to those of Flo and Aunt Mary.

If, for instance, I happened to leave my wrap or my book upstairs, he noticed their absence at once and ran to fetch them for me; and now and then I would catch his eye fixed upon me with that peculiar expression that I had noticed on the day he brought me my shawl. But, as the others did not appear to observe this, I suppose it was my imagination.

On one or two occasions he had brought to my door some flowers which he said had been left from those provided for the table decorations and which he thought I might enjoy.

It struck me at the time that this was, perhaps, just a little—but then, how could I refuse? He certainly meant it only as a kindness, and though it was not quite what one would have expected from a waiter, I should have hurt his feeling had I not accepted them. Besides, Flo said I had done quite right, though she laughed about it for a long time afterwards.

Whenever we left the dining-room Carl always contrived to be near the door, and as we passed out he would make some pleasant remark—generally to me. Of course, there was very little opportunity for him to converse with me, except during breakfast, which I usually took by myself, as Flo and Aunt Mary made it a regular practice to sleep late every morning. Then Carl and I would have quiet little talks together, and it

Digitized by Google

was through them that I learnt something of his history.

As I had always surmised, he had been born to a position in life quite different from that which he now occupied. His father and mother were Alsatians—people of some account in Strasburg—and he had himself been at one time tutor in French and German in the family of an English gentleman. But reverses had come and "Fate had been his enemy," as he touchingly expressed it, until now he was reduced to serve as a waiter.

"But surely," said I one day, when he had been telling me of his woes, "surely with your education and accomplishments you need not stay here, you can find a position and work more worthy of you?"

He shook his head sadly. "Mademoiselle does not know all," he said. "There are some reasons which cannot be explained. I have a duty to perform for my unhappy country, bound under the hated foreign yoke." Then bending low, he whispered:

"My name is not Carl; that is the name of a German—a tyrant!"

"But in some other country where you are not known," I urged. "In England; surely there is a field for you?"

He shook his head again. "It is my oath, mademoiselle. I am pledged on my honour to remain here. You cannot understand, because I cannot explain."

And then he hinted darkly at a political embassy upon which he was employed—a mission for his country which rendered his incognito a necessity.

As I rose from the table I heard something strike the floor at my side. It was the amber pin which I usually wore in my hair, and which had in some unaccountable way become loosened. I was scarcely aware that it had fallen when Carl's quick eyes spied it, and before I could stretch out my hand to take it from him, with a deft movement he had replaced it in my hair.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," he said, as he drew back his hand. "Perhaps I should not have taken the liberty, but it was a service for you—and—your hair, it was so beautiful. I could not help it."

What could I say? He should not have done it, of course, it was frightfully familiar. And yet his manner was so respectful that it was impossible to take offence.

We had been ten days at Interlaken, and intended to stay a fortnight, but during that evening Aunt Mary received a letter from a friend who was ill at Lucerne, which necessitated our making a change of plans, and going away in the morning. "So, girls, this will be our last night here," she said. "You must get your trunks ready for an early start."

As she spoke I heard a deep, long-drawn sigh, so near to me that I was fairly startled. At first I thought it came from Flo, but on turning to look at her I saw that, though she was evidently struggling with some emotion and was choking and gasping over her soup in a way that bade fair to end in strangulation, the motion appeared to be only suppressed laughter.

The sigh could, then, have only come from Carl, who, as usual, stood directly behind my chair.

"Poor fellow," thought I; "I suppose he is thinking of his oath and his duty; no wonder he feels sad." And when, a moment later, he passed me the bread, I took a piece, which I did not want, out of pure sympathy for him and because to refuse it seemed somehow like slighting him.

As soon as dinner was over Aunt Mary went to her room to do her packing. Flo asked me to join her in a farewell shopping excursion, but I declined, for I hate shopping and preferred to spend the last evening in the society of the Jungfrau.

So off she went with some friends, mumbling some rubbish or other about sentiment and moonlight—Flo has no appreciation of Nature, and is always teasing me about what she is pleased to term my "sentimentality."

It was a heavenly night. I strolled idly along the promenade, enjoying the loveliness of the scene. The long row of hotels that fronted the promenade were all brilliant with electric light and thronged with merry people.

In the garden of one of them, beneath the spreading chestnuts, a band of Neapolitans, gaily costumed in red and white, were singing the popular songs of Italy. They played divinely, and I sank down on one of the benches beneath the trees of the promenade to listen to them.

I fell into a reverie and sat there listening, scarcely conscious of the passing of the time and but half aware that someone had come up and was standing but a few feet from me.

A deep, long-drawn sigh startled me to a sense of my surroundings, and, turning my head quickly, I perceived the figure of a man just behind me. He stood well in the shadow, so that I could not see his face; but in the slim erect figure and the manner of holding his hands behind his back I recognised Carl, our waiter.

"Oh, Carl! how you startled me," I said, as soon as I had recovered from the surprise which his presence caused me.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, if I intruded," he said, gently, moving a step nearer. "But I did not mean to alarm you. I, too, have been listening to the music, and I thought there could be no harm—"

"Why, of course, there is no harm, Carl," I answered, kindly. "The music is lovely. I have been making the most of my last evening here; we leave in the morning for Lucerne."

"Yes, I know that," he replied, sighing again; "I know that it is the last night." His tone was wonderfully sad, but I supposed it was his own affairs that troubled him—I never thought of connecting his sorrow in any way with my departure.

"I shall be sorry to leave, too," I continued, dreamily. "It is so quiet and beautiful here, and everyone has been so kind to us. I am sure I shall not find Lucerne half so charming."

"And must you, then, really go, mademoiselle?" he asked, eagerly. "Can you not remain, since you are so satisfied here?"

"I fear not, Carl," I answered, laughing. "My aunt would scarcely be willing to leave me by myself."

"Ah, true; I had forgotten," he murmured, lapsing into silence again.

"It seems so strange," I continued, half to myself, "to find a place where one is quite content; to settle down and live there; to actually become a part of it for a few weeks, and then to pass on, perhaps never to return."

"Ah, no, no, mademoiselle! Do not, I pray you—do not say that!" he cried. "You do not know what you are saying—what your words are to me—you, so kind, so good, so sympathetic——."

"Why, Carl!" said I smilingly, looking round at him in surprise. "You are excited, surely. It is pleasant to think that we perhaps have helped you a little, but we

Digitized by Google

must go on, of course; that is to be expected. Surely that is something that happens to all of us."

"Yes. it is always so," he said, gloomily; "with places, with persons, with everything. We see them, we are fascinated by them, we strive after them, they become our ideals, and then—they pass out of our lives for ever."

"Ah, but that need not be so; that is not true if one is determined that they shall not pass out of one's life," said I.

He came a step nearer and laid his hand on the back of the seat.

"You really mean that, mademoiselle?" he said, his breath coming fast. "You mean that it is possible to hold one's—to one's ideals in spite of fate?"

"Assuredly it is," said I, "if one sets about it in the right way."

"And how is that?" he asked with interest.

"It is because 'Fate,' as you call it, is merely a combination of circumstances, many of which lie distinctly within our control. All those who enter our lives, but especially those by whom we are attracted, leave their impress upon our characters—an impress which we cannot altogether obliterate, but which we may strengthen, if we will, by constantly holding up to ourselves for contemplation and imitation those qualities in them which we love and admire, till we ourselves gradually draw nearer and nearer in spirit to our ideals."

I spoke, perhaps, with unnecessary fervour, quite forgetting, in setting forth a favourite theory, that I was addressing only a waiter. But the effect upon him was electrical.

"Ah, mademoiselle, you give me hope!" he cried, eagerly; and as I turned to look at him, wondering at his intensity, he held up his hand to implore my silence while he continued rapidly: "Mademoiselle, from time to time I have told you somewhat of myself—of my history—to which you have listened with the patience, with the sympathy of an angel. You know that I am not—how do you say it?—in my true station; that I am forced to occupy a position lower than that for which I am fitted. But, oh! mademoiselle, you do not know how, ever since I have seen you, I have been another man. How it has been the delight of my life to be near you—to wait upon you! How all the years I have suffered have been wiped away in the delight of your presence!"

"No, do not stop me, mademoiselle, I beg," he implored, as I rose overcome by surprise at his speech.

"Your own words have given me courage, have given me hope. You tell me that an ideal may be won, may be held in spite of all. Then pardon me, mademoiselle, if I ask you—if I dare to ask you—to listen to my plea. I am only a waiter, and you a lady—perhaps a great lady—I do not know; but if you knew, if you could guess how much you are to me, you would take pity. With you to help me, I could go on; could fight against this cruel fate that holds me down. You would inspire me to be myself—to overcome——" He stopped, his voice quivering with the intense emotion of his plea.

As for me, I was too utterly overwhelmed with astonishment to speak for a moment. "Do you mean to say—to ask me——" I managed to gasp at last.

"Yes, yes, that is it!" he interrupted, eagerly. "I mean to say that I love you, that I want——"

"Oh, hush! for Heaven's sake, hush!" I cried fearful lest someone should overhear us. "What can I do; what can I say to you?" I wailed. "How could I dream that you felt so towards me? What have I done to make you speak so to me?"

I felt indignant; and yet, unconsciously, by my own words I had actually given him encouragement. I could not, therefore, blame him wholly, and to treat with contempt a declaration so manifestly sincere, although so out of place, would have been heartless. As well as I could for nervousness, I gathered up my wits and spoke to him.

"Carl," I said, "you have made a great mistake; and how grieved I am that it should be so I cannot tell you. What you desire is, of course, out of the question—is impossible—for many reasons. And yet, if all you say is true, if I have helped you, if in your difficult position it can still be a help to you to think of me as—as—an ideal—why, then I have no right to forbid you to do so. But, oh, it must be as an ideal only; you must not see me again; indeed, indeed, you must not. Now good-night, good-bye."

I held out my hand, he took it in both of his, bent over it a moment, and then let it go. I gathered up my shawl and fled back to the hotel, leaving him standing there motionless, his hands by his sides, his head bent forward on his breast.

Next morning we left Interlaken.

It is needless to say that breakfast was sent to my room, and I went direct to the carriage, so that Carl and I met no more. But I could not help my thoughts reverting to him with a pity in which there was nothing of contempt.

Often in the years that followed I saw him standing as I had left him—his head bent sorrowfully upon his breast. Yes, I thought tenderly of Carl, though in the eyes of the world the affair might have appeared ridiculous. I was glad that I had been a help to him. It was something to have been one man's ideal, chosen from among the whole world of women, even if that man was only a waiter.

* * * * *

Five years later Flo and I revisited Interlaken and stopped once more at the same hotel. To me the place seemed very little changed. The scenery was as lovely, the hotel quite as comfortable and our little German host as attentive as before. But Carl was there no longer.

I naturally felt a slight embarrassment in speaking of him, but curiosity got the better of me.

One evening while chatting with the proprietor in the hall, I turned the conversation in that direction.

"By the way," I asked quite casually, "*à propos* of waiters, what has become of a very excellent one whom you had in your employ when we were here before? A young German, or Alsatian, called, let me see, I think it was Carl."

The proprietor scanned me rather quizzically for a moment, and, I thought, with special attention to my hair.

"Oh, Carl," he said; "he vas in de mad-house; I tink it vas now five years."

"In a mad-house!" I gasped.

"Oh, yes," he said. "He vas mad like, how you say?—a hatter. He tought he vas all sorts of tings in de secret services of de country."

"And he was not?" I asked; "he has never been?"

"No; he had travelled much, and had read much books; but he never been noting at all only just a waiter. He had, vat you call it, the mania for red hair. It made him crazy-like. I remember, it vas five years ago, and ve had de unusual number of de red-haired ladies in de house dat summer. Vell, Carl, poor fellow, he couldn't stand it, de strain vas too much for him, he propose to dem all!"

Walter Wilson.

Digitized by Google

THE MISSING BONDS.

A BANK MYSTERY.

CHAPTER I.

Close at Hand.

There had been a full half-minute of expressive silence at the breakfast-table of old John Belford, the banker.

"Gideon!"

The old-fashioned name seemed set to a sort of conversational music by the rich, full tones which uttered it, and it was followed, in default of any instant reply, by:

"I'm going to do you a very great favour."

"You don't say so? Well, I'm ready; all my firmness is rallied."

"No, sir; you may finish your coffee."

"And then the astonishment?"

"You can have that now. I've tickets for the concert to-morrow evening, and you're to take me."

"Ruth, my dear!"

Mrs. Belford, from behind the urn, spoke quite suddenly, and Gideon showed his presence of mind by promptly remarking:

"Mrs. Belford, I'm deeply obliged to you. Those are the very words, only I should not have dared——"

The lady of the house was not at that moment smiling upon her husband's big, yellow-haired step-son. She even in a manner cut him off by repeating, in a tone of reproof:

"Ruth, my dear!" and then, after a dignified pause, she added, "did not Mr. Marvin Belford speak to you about this very concert?"

"Did he?" growled old John Belford from the other end of the table; "then Ruth's right. Self-preservation is the first law of nature."

"Ruth," said Gideon, "I'm your man. I'll save you at any cost."

"It will cost you nothing at all, sir, and the music will be good. Besides, I shall wear a new dress, and be unusually handsome. You will be a much envied man."

"And Marvin," smiled Gideon, "will love me better than ever, and I shall be happy."

Gideon Street did not look like a man to be much troubled by the opinions of other people, particularly of anybody he was just then thinking of. Neither did he bear the customary marks of a general favourite among men or women.

It is not easy to make a pet of a broad-shouldered, bearded Viking, with steel-gray eyes, and a deep voice.

Through all the explanatory remarks which followed, he was profoundly polite to Mrs. Belford, and a little more so to Ruth; but there was all the while a species of suppressed chuckle in ambush behind the politeness.

"Ruth Faraday," exclaimed Mrs. Belford at last, "you are much too severe upon your cousin. Marvin Belford is one of Nature's noblemen."

"He's not a cousin of mine, Aunt Carrie; and I must say I think that Nature might have done better."

"And not try very hard," muttered Gideon Street.

At that moment, Mr. Belford said to his wife:

"Now, Carrie, you must let us go. I want a talk with Gid in the library, about some business matters. You can have him, Ruth, after I've done with him."

"I don't want him, Uncle John. I'll be perfectly fair. He need not come near me again until it's time to start for the concert."

"That's fair," said Gideon.

"And even then I won't expect him to talk. All he really need do is to look round him and smile now and then, after I've led him to the right seats."

Her dark, brilliant eyes were dancing with fun, and Gideon, as he slowly rose from the table, thrust his face half-way across it with a remarkable contortion of his manly features, as he asked:

"Would something like this do?"

"Not if there were children."

"Well, you must put me in mind, you know. I can smile."

An hour or so later, without any smile at all upon his face, Gideon Street came out of John Belford's library.

He carried in one hand a Gladstone bag of respectable size, and on his hasty march towards the front door he muttered:

"Good! They've gone upstairs. Shan't have to answer any questions."

Behind him, in the luxurious library, the stalwart, grim old banker sat by the table in the centre, very much as if he were listening for the sound of the closing of the front door.

It came—a sharp, decisive sound—and his heavy fist fell upon the table with a thud.

"That's attended to," he said. "I believe I can trust him. There'll be music all round before a great while, but I don't believe I shall hear much of it. The rest of them, though, will all have tickets."

There was mention being made of tickets and music at that very moment in the drawing-room, for, although Mr. Marvin Belford had been there some time, he had been but a few minutes in the enjoyment of Ruth Faraday's conversation.

He was not so tall nor so strong a man as Gideon Street, but he was much better-looking, his eyes and hair were darker, and he was dressed with more care.

His response to Ruth's greeting had been made with a grace which did him credit, but the pair, had they been listening, might have heard the street door open and shut just as the young lady innocently remarked:

"The concert? Delightful? Yes, it will be no doubt. Mr. Street has promised to take me."

"Con—— him! You're booked already! Too late, am I? Now, Ruth, you might have known I should come. Gid Street, too!"

"Well, yes, I did think you possibly might, but I could not run any risk. I've been of age now these three days, and it's made me ever so much wiser than I used to be."

Digitized by Google

"Nothing could make you more beautiful, Ruth."

"Now, Mr. Belford, you must call me Miss Faraday. I'm quite taken with my new dignity and I mean to claim all its advantages."

"What? With me, Ruth?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

"I've known you from childhood. You used to call me your cousin, and Marvin, and——"

There was a touch of earnestness in his voice and manner, enough to suggest something more than a whim in Ruth's forethought concerning the concert.

Her interruption was baldly matter-of-fact.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Belford, that's all very true; but I insist upon being a grown-up young lady now. Call me Miss Faraday, and tell me whom you think you'll take to the concert, now you find I'm out of the question."

"Nobody on earth."

"Now, Mr. Belford! You're not acquainted anywhere else? Why can't you be good and unselfish, just for once, and ask some homely girl?"

"I declare I will! I'll get the ugliest, worst-dressed, most ill-tempered, cross-eyed——"

"Poor, too; don't forget that."

The rest of that conversation was not worth repeating on behalf of Marvin Belford.

It was a relief to him, at last, when Mrs. John Belford came into the room, called him her "dear nephew," and gave him the stately kiss of an admiring aunt.

It is quite possible she might have been doing better service in the library at that moment, in the part of a devoted wife.

There sat the banker yet, by the table, his grey head bowed upon his wrinkled hands, and the voice which came through them almost sepulchral:

"I can't quite make up my mind to it, but I know it's coming. It has waited a long time, but it will not wait much longer now. Glad I can trust Gid. It's a strange thing to think of, and to know it is so close at hand, after all these years. Coming—coming. I cannot make up my mind to it. She is a good girl, and I've loved her ever since she was born."

CHAPTER II.

The First Blow Falls.

There were five persons whose grave position or duty gave them access to the strong-room belonging to Belford Brothers, the well-known and highly-respected banking-house.

Of these, the first two, the heads of the house, John, and his brother, William, rarely looked into it.

Those who did so more frequently were the junior partner, Mr. Marvin Belford; the spectacled book-keeper, Mr. Ruggles; and Mr. Gideon Street, in his confidential capacity of cashier.

The minor dignitaries of the ancient house could all say, indeed, that they had often looked in upon the sombre security of that iron-bound cell; they had even awe-struck memories of having put their feet inside it; but not one of them had been entrusted with the keys of the massive locks.

But on the day after the events just narrated, there were five consecutive visitors to the strong room, and each in turn found some attraction for his eyes in a large oblong package, tied with cross-belts of red tape, which lay a little by itself on one of the lower shelves.

The ancient book-keeper did not touch the package but he bent his white head over it as he said:

"Miss Faraday's bonds? Well, they're a special deposit, but I wish they were somewhere else. It won't do for me to meddle; but her uncle ought to look out for that. I forgot: Mr. John Belford does not know exactly."

He shut his lips tightly and went out.

His place was soon after taken by the portly form of Mr. William Belford, more grim and stately than his brother John, and more a walking assurance of financial solvency.

He glanced round the safe, to see that all was right, and his cold brown eyes rested on the package.

"Ruth's fortune, eh? We must look out for that, for Marvin's sake. I must tell John to put it somewhere else. He doesn't know the real condition of things, but I can give him a reason for it."

His heavy, stately tread passed out of the strong-room, and he may have been correct as to his brother ignorance of peril to that package, for in less than ten minutes later John Belford was regarding "Ruth's fortune" with an iron smile, and hoarsely chuckling over it.

"That's safe, at all events. I owed that much to her mother. I'm glad nobody can touch it."

It was necessary, a little later, for Gideon Street to carry into the vault a small, japanned tin box, and the smile he turned upon the tape-bound parcel would have answered him admirably for skirmish uses at the concert on the coming evening.

"There it is. Ruth is more of an heiress than I thought for. The old gentleman's managed well for her."

The smile faded as he spoke, and its place was taken first by a crimson flush and then by a singular paleness.

"They're not for you, Gideon, my boy. Any fool can see that. Do your duty, but don't you let it make a fool of you."

Excellent words to be uttered in the strong-room of a bank, whether as a riddle, or an exhortation; and when he had taken one more look, he returned to his desk.

It was late in the day before Mr. Marvin Belford found any occasion for crossing that iron threshold, and when he did so, there were no eyes upon him.

He had a deposit to make, taking it from a travelling-bag which he carried in his hand.

It was an oblong package, fastened curiously with red tape, and when he put it down upon the shelf beside Ruth Faraday's fortune, he was certainly justified in remarking:

"No man alive could tell them apart. Even the tape is of the same width, and the creases in the paper come exactly right. A perfect pair of twins."

He was evidently pleased with the comparison he was making, but at the end of it he picked up one of the "twins," and slipped it into his hand-bag.

A change of mind, doubtless, and he had decided not to leave his deposit in the vault, for he carried that bag with him in his cab, after banking hours, when he went home. He seemed in low spirits, too, all the way, and it was probably well for him that he had in prospect an evening of amusement.

He went to the concert, truly, but he had failed to comply with the charitable suggestion of Ruth Faraday, for she herself could claim no great advantages over the well-dressed girl at the side of Marvin Belford.

"Shall I smile on him, Ruth?" asked Gideon. "I want to do so."

"Do, please—your very best. It's just what I've been doing."

Digitized by Google

"Yes, I saw; and he tried to smile back. Failed awfully. I'll give him a chance to try again if I catch his eye. He loves me."

"There! you hit him."

There are a few things which Ruth either had not yet learned, or had forgotten.

For instance, you may know a man for years and years, and you may respect him exceedingly; he may even be your uncle's step-son and live a good while in the same house with you, and yet you may not become the least bit in the world intimate with him—especially if you have it in your mind that you half-way dislike him, and can't tell why.

If, however, you begin to let him slip from "old acquaintance" into "old friend," there is no telling how far he will slip along the line—or you either. It is a very slippery line.

That night, however, Ruth was in remarkably high spirits, and Gideon had something upon his mind which absolutely compelled him to smile occasionally.

Mrs. John Belford had retired before her husband's niece returned from the concert, but he was up still, and he waylaid Ruth as she passed the library door.

"Come in, my dear," he said, as he slowly returned to his seat by the table.

"What is it, Uncle John?" Her fair face was yet flushed with excitement and pleasure as she stepped lightly in, but she quickly added: "Are you not well? Is there anything the matter?"

He was looking in her face earnestly and lovingly, but there was a white, strange shade on his features as of suppressed and bitter pain.

"Nothing at all, my dear. Listen to me: can you keep a secret?"

She was serious enough now, as she listened to those deep, ominous, all but tremulous tones.

"I can," she replied. "Try me."

"It may not seem a great one just now, but you must keep it. You are good friends with Gideon?"

"Good enough, Uncle John, especially this evening."

"The music was good?"

"A charming concert. But what about Gideon?"

"He is a man to be trusted. In a little while it will be necessary for you to trust someone. Trust him. Not anybody else."

"Not even you?"

"No, not even me. I am an old rascal. He is young and honest. No matter what turns up, trust Gideon Street."

"What can you mean?"

"Go to bed now. Keep your secret. One of these days you will know what I mean."

She tried again, but there was no breath of explanation to be obtained from the old gentleman. His face grew hard and his voice harsh, but he kept to himself all the remainder of his secret.

The next day things seemed to go on as usual, but if John Belford had intended a deep and cunning plot to increase the distance in Ruth Faraday's behaviour to Gideon, he had planned well, and with complete success. Even smiles across the table died like flowers in frost.

Gideon took it all with external calmness, and Ruth could not complain of any attempt on his part to break the barrier of ice she had so unaccountably raised.

The days went by for about a fortnight in a curiously chilly way, considering how fine was the bright October weather, and then there came a great sensation to a very wide social and financial "circle."

Gideon Street carried it down to the bank, and delivered it to Mr. William Belford and his son Marvin, on their arrival. A telegram sent earlier had missed them.

"Apoplexy? Dead in his bed? Marvin, come in with me at once. This is an awful blow!"

In half-a-minute more the two were closeted in the private office at the bank, leaving Gideon and Mr. Ruggles to spread the sensation as customers came in.

* * * * *

"Father," asked Marvin, "had you any suspicion of such a danger?"

"Knew he'd been in fear of it this long time. He was under medical treatment. Well, he's gone!—Marvin, this will precipitate matters. This will be a rough day, but you can keep all steady while I drive to John's house and back. I'll see Carrie, and give some directions, and then we must prepare——"

"For a storm? No, I don't see how it can come to-day."

"It will come. I've been fighting it off these ten years."

"Nobody knows there's any deficit any more than they did yesterday."

"You're not as old as I am. I can feel it in my bones."

He hurriedly left the bank, and drove away, and it did seem for awhile as if he had been under some mistake.

Not a breath of suspicion had ever blown upon the credit of Belford Brothers. In this, their hour of trial, they were entitled to all imaginable sympathy and business courtesy, and it was lavishly extended to them—especially the sympathy, in many and varied expressions thereof.

Still, as the day went by, and after William Belford's return, a good many people seemed to be in need of money, and those who had any right to draw on Belford Brothers "at sight" began to do so.

"We've weathered it, father," said Marvin, at three o'clock.

"How about to-morrow?"

"Well, the funeral won't be till the day after that——"

"John's or the bank's? I tell you, my boy, there is something in the air. That affair will have to come out if we suspend. There is one thing we might do——"

"Not with my consent."

"Never mind, now. I will think about it. That would tide us over, and we could arrange afterwards."

"Never! And we can weather it just as well without."

"Don't you be too sanguine. You'd better look in at John's with me on our way home."

That had been a dark day at the banker's residence.

Gideon Street had been glad to get away from it in the morning on the plea of business necessity. He had discovered, before going, that his affection for his step-father had been stronger than he knew, and so the blow fell on him the more heavily.

He had also been astonished at the extreme grief expressed by Ruth Faraday; but he had been greatly puzzled by a thing he heard her whispering to herself, as she leaned above the cold face of her uncle:

"I know now a part of what he meant. What can the rest of it be? This was coming then, and he knew it."

Gideon had not heard Mrs. Belford say, in the shelter of the curtained window:

"I'm glad my own property is settled on me. William will be in control of everything else."

Digitized by Google

Nevertheless, it was not without some show of reason that Gideon had remarked to Ruth, before he left the house:

"I will say just one word. I'm glad there's one person besides myself with heart enough to be genuinely sorry."

"Why, Gideon, I loved him."

"He loved you, too, and you will know it some day."

"I'm sure he thought everything of you. But I can't talk now. Do you think they will come here immediately."

"Of course they will. I don't mean to be here when they come."

Ruth was within a breath of saying: "I wish you would!" but she did not say it, and so, when William Belford and Marvin called to mingle their grief with that of the stricken household, Gideon was not there.

CHAPTER III.

An Awkward Discovery.

It was the middle of the day before the funeral, and the private room of the old banking-house contained only Mr. William Belford and his son. Business went on in the outer office in a manner strictly conformed to the needs and proprieties of so sombre a state of affairs,

"Marvin, it's only a loan."

"I protest!"

"You have no right as yet. If you and Ruth were already married, it would be different, I am my brother's sole executor."

"What of that, father? Ruth is of age. This is her own private property. You've no control. I doubt if Uncle John would have any by right, if he were alive."

"It's a deposit, Marvin; I won't break if I can help it!"

The oblong, tape-bound package lay on the table before him, and he tore it open with a movement so sudden, that Marvin's outstretched hand was all too late.

"What! What is this?"

"Mere waste paper!"

"Whose work is this?"

It was hard to say which face of those two was changing colour and expression the more rapidly as their eyes glanced from each other to the heap of rubbish on the table.

"Could Uncle John——"

"No, indeed! Nor old Ruggles. This is worse than the deficit. It is utter and everlasting ruin!"

"There is but one other man."

"Gideon! Call him in."

In a moment more Mr. William Bedford was sternly pointing to the contents of Ruth Faraday's special deposit and demanding:

"What does this mean, Mr. Street?"

"Rubbish, I should say. Why?"

"What do you know about it?"

"Nothing at all."

"Mr. Street, do you know we have found a large deficit in the books of this house?"

"Perfectly well."

"And now here is this robbery, evidently committed by someone who had access to the vault."

"It looks very bad indeed."

Not a hair of Gideon's yellow beard and moustache quivered, but the latter had a twitch in them as if they were beginning to curl a little.

"Have you any explanation to offer?" thundered the banker.

"Possibly I have. The plundering has been done quite systematically. I think it has required co-operative labour—say of two persons, at least."

"Sir, I will have you arrested!"

"A scapegoat would certainly be desirable, but I doubt if I am the right man. I shall certainly refuse to serve."

"Leave the room, sir!"

"I will, and I shall also immediately leave the bank, but not the town. I shall not run away, Mr. Belford."

"Go, sir! Go."

He went, not hastily, nor as one who had flight in his mind.

"Marvin, this is awful! We can stand it through to-day."

"To-morrow is the funeral, next day Sunday. We shall not open our doors again, father, now those drafts are coming."

"We can't pay ten shillings in the pound; but we shall manage to keep a-going till three o'clock."

So they did, but the air was becoming mysteriously filled with rumours undefined concerning the stability of the bereaved firm.

It was surprising how many men were ready to remark, "I don't know what to think about it; John was the backbone of the house." And he was dead, and that very evening his brother was compelled to remark to his widow, "There will be nothing to divide, Carrie."

"What, William! Nothing?"

"Not a shilling. There has been a heavy defalcation, heavy losses on top of it. Quite a run now, and more coming. The house will go into bankruptcy to-morrow."

"Oh, Mr. Belford," suddenly exclaimed Ruth, whose ears had lost no word he had been saying, "can I not help you? There are my bonds; take them. Uncle John said he had more than doubled the amount left me."

Mrs. Belford was staring at her brother-in-law in opened-eyed, silent astonishment, while he on his part seemed struggling with a great gasp of some kind, as he turned his head away from the tearful generosity in Ruth Faraday's face.

"Your bonds, my dear? There has been a robbery as well as a defalcation. Your fortune is all gone—every penny of it."

"Robbery? All gone? Who could have done it?"

"It's all a robbery!" all but Mrs. Belford screamed. "Who did it, William? Who did it?"

"Be calm, Carrie, be calm. It's an awful state of affairs. Tell me, did Gideon Street come home as usual?"

"Yes, but he went out again."

"I doubt if you will see him again very soon. Thank you for your kind offer Carrie. It is time for me to go."

"Do you suspect Gideon?"

"I will not say more now."

"I will, then," said Ruth firmly. "I do not suspect him. You must not do anything against him, so far as I am concerned."

"My dear, generous hearted girl, things must take their own course."

There was nothing Ruth could think of in reply to

Digitized by Google

that, and, after Mr. Belford withdrew, she had quite enough to do in soothing the now hysterical grief of the bankrupt's widow.

Only one gleam of common-sense broke through the black cloud of all that wifely sorrow.

"Ruth Faraday," she said, "how could you be such a fool? If your fortune had been in your own hands, you'd have lent it to them, and you'd have lost it. It's just as well somebody stole it. I'm glad mine's safe, what there is of it. What will become of you?"

That was a question with which Ruth had not yet begun to wrestle but she saw that it must come, by the light Mrs. Belford let in upon her.

She said nothing at that moment, but she did a great deal of thinking all that evening, while she sat alone in the library wondering when Gideon Street would return and what could keep him so late. So late? It was very late; and the thought whispered to her at last that she would rather not see him when he came in, for she would not dare to tell him the dreadful things Mr. William Belford had said about him.

Gideon chose his own hour, and he did not return, but he was at the breakfast-table next morning, as usual.

He was all alone, for neither of the ladies came down. Then he went to his own room, and, some hours later, none of those who gathered to join in the solemn ceremonials of the occasion perceived, in his behaviour, or in that of any member of the Belford family, a trace of improper feeling, only the uncommunicative reserve of men and women in affliction.

Perhaps it was as much Ruth's fault as anyone's that Gideon Street, and not Marvin Belford, assisted her to a carriage, and took a vacant seat beside her.

All the proprieties were duly observed but in less than an hour after the return from the funeral, a couple of gentleman called to see Mr. Street.

He went out with them, and did not return that day; he did not even leave word where he was going, or send back any message to inform his anxious friends why he should not come back.

CHAPTER IV.

Hoist With His Own Petard.

That same night, it was well known in the financial community that Belford Brothers would never again open their doors for business. It was known, too, that there were "some particular nasty features" about the failure.

Mr. Marvin Belford's own room was, therefore, the most comfortable place for him to be in, and he was there; but he had been somewhere else first. He had spent an hour with Ruth Faraday, and he was evidently thinking about her now, as he sat and stared at the small bit of coal in the grate before him.

"I've been too fast with Ruth," he said aloud. "She's feeling awfully cut up just now, I ought to have waited. She'll come round, of course, when she wakes up to the facts of the case. Hasn't a glimmer of an idea what it is to work for a living. I shall have to play for a while, but it beats me what I'm to do about those things just now. It's a queer secret to keep, but I'll keep it. Yes, I will, if I have to keep it for ever."

There was something harshly husky in his voice as he uttered the last words.

He rose, and walked slowly to a trunk in a corner.

The door of the room was already locked, so that he was in no danger of intrusion, while he drew from the trunk, and placed upon his table an oblong, tape-bound package, remarking:

"I'll see what there is of it!"

In about half-a-minute more he had seen, and he was staggering back from the table with a large white envelope in his hand.

On the table, released from its careful wrapping, was a heap of old letters, and other worthless things, and Marvin Belford had not found a single word to express the feeling of astounded disappointment with which he had stripped their mockery bare.

That one envelope had lain on top, and was addressed in a large, firm hand to "William Belford Esq."

"I may as well open it," he gasped.

He did so, and the broad sheet of paper he unfolded from it bore only these words:

> We are even now, my dear brother. Let us divide the deficit between us, You will not be able to lay your hands upon Ruth's fortune just now.
>
> Affectionately,
>
> John Belford.

"Divide it between them?" gasped Marvin. "I thought as much. All I took didn't make the matter any worse. So Uncle John swamped Ruth, too, did he? It's rough on me just now; but what if she had accepted me? I should have been in a box then."

There was comfort in his misery, therefore, and there was fire in the grate, and all that pile of rubbish would burn, including Uncle John's letter.

That was an uncomfortable evening for a great many people; but not one of all those who mourned for John Belford, or for the failure of the house of which he had been the head, passed the long hours more wretchedly than did Mr. Gideon Street.

There is hardly anything more trying to manly fortitude than an arrest on a felonious accusation, to be locked up over Sunday, to sit and eat one's heart out in solitude, with a prospect of possible years and years of just such looking-up in some lonely cell or other.

"It would be almost as bad to be let out now," said Gideon to himself more than once, "and have men look at me as they will."

Late in the night, as he lay there in the darkness other words burst from him:

"And she! Ruth Faraday, to think I am a thief And that I stole from her!"

It was not exactly a yell of agony, but it was a very good suppressed likeness of one.

He could send for a lawyer, even on Sunday, and he could be assured that his arrest was an unwarrantable, hasty proceeding, and that the magistrate would surely let him out again on Monday morning, after a few formalities, but something very black had settled over the soul of Gideon Street. He knew, as well as if he had been told, that the reason of his absence was now well understood at the residence of John Belford's widow.

What he did not know was that the news had been carried their by Marvin Belford, or how much of emphasis it had added to the replies made by Ruth Faraday to sundry gracefully, even passionately, tendered pleadings.

One night more, a dreadfully dark one, full of tempests out of doors, and marked by other tempests in some homes, and in such dim crypts as they lock up suspected felons in.

Gideon's man of law was right, nevertheless, and

Google

before mid-day on Monday he was free to walk past the closed doors of the old banking-house.

He knew he was stared at by a number of men who passed him as he came up the street; but only one old acquaintance actually spoke to him.

"What's the cause of the failure?" was Gideon's reply. "Can't say. I'm told the money ran short, and they had to close. I left them the day before. You will have to ask somebody else."

Ruth Faraday was in her own room that afternoon when a servant knocked at the door and told her Mr. Street wished to see her.

"Tell him I'll come down immediately."

Then she sat down upon a trunk she had been packing.

"Gideon," she exclaimed. "I thought he was in prison. What shall I say to him? Guilty? No, indeed; I don't believe a word of it. If I keep waiting he will think I do."

He stood in the middle of the apartment when she flashed in, and she paused a moment.

He had never looked so very large, and strong, and noble, only his face was ghastly white.

"Miss Faraday—"

"Gideon, I don't believe it!"

"But, Miss Faraday, I spent last night, the day before and the night before that, in a police cell. I am dishonoured."

"You did not do it? You did not take their money, or my bonds?"

"Their money—the deficit?—it was gone before I entered the bank. But *I did take your bonds, all of them.*"

"You did? Gideon!"

"Yes, I did. Your uncle gave them to me to keep for you, and I have kept them. Here they are."

She had seen the valise he was now opening. It had given her a swift thought that he was going away, but now he took from it a package which he tore open in her presence.

"Gideon—"

"They are all here, Miss Faraday. I have been true to my trust."

"Don't count them, Gideon; please don't! I would trust you with anything; I promised Uncle John I would. Did you say they put you in prison?"

She was close to him now, and looking up in his face, for the idea was growing upon her that he had somehow been suffering on her account, and the tears were in her eyes and voice.

"Never mind that, Miss Faraday. I can't leave, of course, till the investigation is over. I shall go then; but I wanted to put your property in your own hands as soon as possible."

A great storm was shaking him from head to foot, but his eye and voice were steady till her answer came.

"These things? What on earth can I do with them? Won't you take care of them for me? Wouldn't they help you to get into business, Gideon, or half of them?"

"Ruth Faraday!"

"You are not dishonoured; you are not disgraced. I don't believe a word of it. Won't you, Gideon? Please do."

The tears were pouring down her face in a great shower as she looked upon the terrible pain in his, and her hands went out to him in such a way that he could but take them; they seemed so eager to be taken.

"I suffered all yesterday," she cried, "after I knew what they had done to you."

The two pair of hands—the small ones and the very large ones—clung fast to each other for a moment, and a beautiful light dawned first in Ruth's face, and then in Gideon's.

"Ruth? Is it so, Ruth?"

"Gideon, I've been finding it out for two weeks, but it must have been so long ago."

"I found it out a year ago, and it all but killed me. Yesterday, all the night long, as I lay there——"

"Gideon, please do not! It is dreadful!"

His head had been bending lower and lower for some seconds, and he dropped one of her hands, that his arm might be free.

"Oh, Ruth, I can face anybody now. All the world."

Too much time could not be devoted to this interview, for it was due to Mrs. Belford that the state of affairs should be explained to her.

"I don't understand it at all, Ruth," was the widow's final comment. "It's all terrible. And so your fortune is safe, and you are engaged to Mr. Street, and nobody knew a word about it, and they put him in prison. It's enough to drive me out of my senses."

Ruth had yet another explanation to make that day, and it seemed to puzzle very much a pair of brisk-mannered gentlemen who called to see her on important business.

"Do we understand you aright, Miss Faraday? Do you mean to say you had no property in the hands of Belford Brothers?"

"Not any, sir. It was all removed some time ago—before the death of my uncle. I have not lost anything."

"But Mr. Street is accused——"

"No, he is not, sir; not by me. I am of full age. He has my entire confidence, and he is in entire charge of my business affairs."

"Ah! Certainly. Of course. I think we had better go: do you not, Mr. Johnson?"

"I suppose so. There's an awful leak in this business somewhere. 'Tisn't here."

Ruth Faraday had never in her life before appeared dignified and positive as she did while she was bowing out those two emissaries of law and justice, and there came a rustle of silk behind her as she did so.

"Ruth, dear, I'm so glad Mr. Street saved your bonds! But what will brother William say, and your cousin Marvin?"

"What will they say? I never want to see them again. How will they dare to look Gideon in the face, after what they have done? Arresting him!"

"Oh, dear me! I had almost forgotten about that. I was thinking of you and Marvin."

"Aunt Carrie—well, you might as well know. I told Marvin what I thought of him and his father last night, when he told me they had given Gideon into custody. He will never trouble me any more."

It was not likely he would, now that any vision he might have of Ruth would surely confound itself in his mind with another of Gideon Street.

Nevertheless, after all was settled, even long afterwards, when Mrs. Ruth Street and her husband had freely pardoned everybody, neither Mr. William Belford nor his son, Marvin, was able to give himself a satisfactory explanation of the mystery of the tape-bound package and the bonds it did not contain. Like the long-hidden deficit, it remained one of the "mysteries of banking."

Walter Michael.

Digitized by Google

BOOK IV.—CONCERNING A SOJOURN - - AMONGST THE DAJIANS.

CHAPTER II.

How the Dajians foolishly arrived before their appointed time: how Norah wisely and pluckily did the same: how she and the two white men climbed the giant stairs: how they supped off baked eggs: and how Sneyd and O'Neill made a solemn compact.

I AM afraid that Murtagh O'Neill did not get much sleep during the remainder of that night, and I rather think that Laurence Sneyd shared his vigil. But neither of them spoke, so we will not examine their thoughts. Day came, hot and glaring as usual—for it was only the lower ground that was veiled by the morning's mists—and after breaking their fasts, they lay stretched on their moss beds wishing that the leathern-footed hours would deign to hasten their pace.

They had never felt kindly towards the Dajians; but now, if wishes could have done it, the whole aboriginal population of that island would have been swept into eternity in less than a moment of time.

The two were lying listlessly on the moss, pestered by their intruding thoughts, and scheming threatening things in their minds. The sun had passed his zenith, and was arcing a course of scorching splendour away down to the brazen waters of the west, when a sound from behind them made the two prisoners spring to their feet, weapons in hand.

The noise which had disturbed them was the grating of the huge stone that closed the temple doorway. With a noiseless tread, and without interchange of a word, they stationed themselves one on either side of the passage, hidden by the projecting corner from those without, yet in positions which could not be bettered. The great rock rolled upwards, and a couple of savages entered the passage side by side. They walked carelessly through the thickness of the wall, and saw at a glance the attitude their prisoners had taken. But too late. The clubs swung down, and the savages sank to the earth, corpses. Two others pressed forward pluckily enough to avenge their deaths, but only shared the same fate; and after them, others. But their efforts were without avail. Far their superiors in point of physical strength at ordinary times, and stirred up as they were now, either of the white men was more than a match for four of the sturdiest of his opponents.

There was no thought of quarter. It was kill or be killed. The ground was a shambles. The green mossy turf was trampled into a dark red slime. The passage was choked with corpses.

"Out into the open," shouted Sneyd. "They are shutting the door."

He sprang forward as he spoke, beating down a savage who opposed him. O'Neill followed, but it was too late. Those without, terrified at the slaughter which they had witnessed, were shutting in all together; and as the huge stone sank to its place, it crushed the life out of one of their compatriots who was vainly endeavouring to escape from the raging furies who were so remorselessly slaying within. Sneyd's desperate plan of renewing the combat against all comers outside had failed.

The survivors would go away and return shortly with an overwhelming force. Well, they would doubtless contrive to kill some of them too before they fell in their turn. And so they would cross the Styx at the head of a large company. But poor Norah, brave loving girl, what of her? How could she escape from these man eating ruffians?

"Why!" exclaimed O'Neill in his agony, "why are men tortured like this? Why can't they do their devil's work by themselves without dragging a woman into it with them?"

"It isn't your fault," Sneyd said to him soothingly. "Remember you didn't know of her coming. She crossed to Daji of her own free will and accord."

"Don't shpake like that," exclaimed the Irishman roughly. "She's an angel, an' I won't hear a word against her. There, don't take it unkindly. I didn't mane to say anything hard. Ownly, the fact is, I'm nearly off me head wid the thoughts o' what'll happen to her, poor girl, and—Howly wars! there she is, as I'm a red and tatthered sinner."

Sneyd followed his companion's excited gaze, and saw the girl just landing on the top of the wall.

"Norah, Norah darlint," cried O'Neill, "av yez ever loved me, go away out of this. Those murtherin' devils are close beside, an' they may grab yez any minute."

"They've gone away, and they won't be back for another hour," she replied coolly enough. "I've watched everything from the wood, and saw exactly what was going on. There is no fear of them yet. And if they were close at hand, I wouldn't stir without you. Here's the rope. I'll make it fast to the top of the ladder, and then let it down. There; is it long enough? Yes, it is; how fortunate. Be quick and come up now. I'll hold the end."

"Up wid you, Sneyd. You're lightest. And then you can take hold till I'm aloft. I wouldn't have my hulking weight cut her pretty fingers for all the gould in Peru, an' all that's in Chili to boot."

Google

The clubs swung down, and the savages sank to the earth, corpses.

Up the ex-cornet climbed, hand over fist, and seized the rope from Norah's hand. O'Neill quickly gained the cornice, exchanged one short tender embrace with his sweetheart, and then helped her on to the ladder. She was on the ground in twenty seconds, and in less than the minute the two men were beside her.

O'Neill began to move off up the valley.

The girl hesitated. "I have been hiding in the woods," she said. "There is a very snug place in the middle of a thicket of agave bushes."

"That won't do now, me poor darlint," replied the Irishman. "It will be a hue and cry with a vengeance when they open the cage and find the birds is flown. They didn't guess ye were on the island, an' so they never looked for yez. But they'll know there are three of us here now, bad scram to 'em, an' it's mighty little pace we'll be allowed, accordin' to my way o' thinkin'. So away we go to the mountain."

"Where is the canoe that brought you over, Norah?" asked Sneyd, as the three of them set off at a sharp jog trot.

"I hauled it up and hid it in some mangroves. But the place is a good way from here."

"So much the better. This immediate neighbourhood will be dangerous to our health for some time to come. But if we can contrive to lie low amongst the hills for a few days, till the hottest of the pursuit is over, we may manage to slip down to it some dirty night, and get clear away before the morning's sunrise."

They hurried along over the rough boulder-strewn floor of the valley, heading to what appeared to be the only practicable pass to the upper ground, a narrow sloping gully where the steep sides joined together. It was little better than a fissure, and a tidy stream of water was foaming down it with monotonous roar. But that path was their only chance. To turn back would, in all probability, be to run into the very arms of the Dajians. And the sides of the valley, near its head were utterly unscaleable. So they went to the foot of the waterfall as fast as their legs would carry them, rested for half a minute to regain their wind, and then began to climb the slippery crags.

Their progress was slow. Though her little feet had never known the protection of a shoe, and their natural soles were not easily affected, the rough jagged stones, over which she had been running for the last two miles, had made poor Norah terribly footsore. She limped along bravely enough, and flatly refused to let O'Neill carry her as he wished to do.

But the pace had slackened for all that towards the end of the run; and when it came to climbing, their forward movement was even more retarded. The fissure had appeared steep from a distance; but on trial it showed itself to be even worse than its looks. It consisted of a series of giant steps, so to speak, many of them nine and ten feet high, and all wet with spray or running water, and greasy with slime.

Each step was gained with a heavy effort. Sneyd climbed on to the Irishman's sturdy shoulders, put his hands on to the slippery ledge above him, took one more step on to the fiery head beneath, gave a spring, and scrambled as best he could. Then leaning down, he caught hold of Norah, who was held up as high as O'Neill could reach, and pulled her up beside him. And then Norah held his legs whilst he stretched over to grasp O'Neill's hand, and lug him up also.

One could hardly conceive a more arduous piece of exercise for a hot day; and had not the water of the fall kept them continuously moist and cool, I don't think they could have stood it. But as it was, remembering what each had at stake, they stuck doggedly to the task, and scaled the steep ascent little by little, till they opened out a small rocky plateau right up in the heart of the crags.

The place was wild in the extreme, and full of strong-beaked sea-fowl, who circled around the intruders' heads, screaming madly and fiercely. On all sides rose bold bare rocks, whose summits had never been crossed by the foot of man. On the stony ground beneath them lay the innumerable nests of the sea-birds, packed so closely that there was not room to tread between them. The threatening attitude of the birds terrified Norah, and instinctively she clung to her lover for protection.

"Never fear me, pretty one," he said to her assuringly, "they'll do yez no hurt. They mayn't be the pleasantest of neighbours. They're dirthy, an' untidy, an' they talk so loud, one can scarcely hear one's own lips move. But they're a sight less harmful than the other two-legged

bastes we've all three been livin' amongst for the last few weeks. Now we must look around us for some sort of a place to camp in for awhile."

"Here we are," said Sneyd cheerily. "These two big stones have got a fair-sized hollow beneath them. The entrance is small, but one can squeeze through, and once inside, we shall find ourselves as snug as can be. We can rob these nests of enough sticks to make a fire, and there's a hole in the roof to let the smoke out. And—by Jove, yes—how fortunate. There's another tiny cave further in, that will make Norah a bed-room. Really, we are in luck's way."

"In wid yez, Norah," exclaimed O'Neill, "an' light us a fire. Here's wood. Sorry to trouble yez, but we're so clumsy at that game. We might rub the stuff to powdher, an' never get it so much as to smoke."

Norah selected a pointed stick about as thick as a lead pencil, and started rubbing it up and down another larger piece of wood which was laid on the ground, working out a narrow groove, and pushing the dust which formed into a heap at the end furthest from her. Presently a thin spiral of smoke commenced to ascend from the wood-dust. She rubbed away industriously, and the smoke increased, till a glow showed through the little pile. Then desisting from her efforts, she piled a few dry splinters on the smouldering ember, fanned it into a blaze with her breath, adding more sticks, and in five minutes from commencing the task, had a reeking fire shooting up flames four feet high.

"Bravo, Norah," said Sneyd, coming in with another armful of fuel. "We people from the west are apt to think a great deal of our cleverness, but that's one thing you can beat us at, and always will do. I've tried times out of number to light a fire in your fashion. But I make myself hotter than I can the tinder. Ha! here's O'Neill with the supper."

"There's two score of eggs at the very laste," said the Irishman, depositing his burden gingerly on the rocky floor. "Some of 'em may be addled; others is shure to have chickens in 'em; but there should be some new-laid, an' on them, plaze the pigs, we'll sup. It don't do to be over dainty, an' besides, there's worst things than say-fowls' eggs. Let the fire burn away a bit, Norah darlint, an' thon put 'em into the red embers. They'll bake bravely in their own jackets, just like spuds. An' whilst yez get 'em cooked, we two bhoys 'll go out an' see av we can't lay our fists on something else."

Sneyd looked up inquiringly. The rocky little plateau afforded no other food besides eggs, and the fishy-flavoured gulls who laid them. He was going to make some remark on the futility of such a search, but the Irishman silenced him with a look, and so he went outside without demur.

When they had moved away out of earshot of the girl, O'Neill said, "Those bastes know the road we've gone."

"How did you find that out?"

"Wid me eyes. I thought I'd give a look round when I came for them eggs, an' so crept cautiously up behind that big rock yonder, an' looked down. Come along an' see for yerself."

They went in the direction O'Neill indicated, and peered down into the valley, taking care not to show themselves. A knot of Dajians were standing half-way between the temple and the foot of the waterfall. It was too far for their voices to carry, but their gestures were unmistakable. They had evidently come across some footprints on a piece of soft ground—there were two or three marshy patches beside the stream—for they were examining these every now and then, and trying to follow them up. And what with that, and the fact that one or other of them kept continually pointing to the cliffs above the waterfall, there was not the slightest doubt that they had deduced, from the evidence before them, the route that the fugitives had taken.

Some were evidently for continuing the pursuit without further delay, but a second faction had other ideas. The argument waxed loud and stormy, but those in favour of delay seemed to win the day. For presently the whole band, with the exception of three, stopped and stretched themselves out to rest under the lee of an outlier of rock. The three sped away down the valley, making for the woodland.

"They're going to blockade us. And those three fellows have been sent off for provisions," said Sneyd.

"Maybe," replied O'Neill, "but if so, why do they go to cover? My idea is, that they are keeping out of sight in the hope that we shouldn't know they're there. When night comes they'll scramble up here, an' hope to take us by surprise."

"So much the worse for them," returned Sneyd grimly. "This is a hard position to storm, if it is defended. And that's a thing which can easily be done. Look, there's shot ready piled up for us at the very brink of the precipice. There's been a fall of rock there some time or other, and the stone has cracked into fragments as it fell. There are small pieces that we can heave, and larger pieces that we can't lift. But we can roll them over. I shall have little compunction in giving these brutes a lesson."

"And I none at all," said the Irishman. "I don't love 'em on me own account. But now Norah's here to fight for, it's a regular demon I am, an' no less. Let's be gettin' back now. The poor girl will be fidgeting av we stay away over long. Besides, there's no need to kape a look-out yet awhile. They won't throuble us before dark, an' we've at laste a couple of hours more daylight before us still."

So back they went to the hollow beneath the rocks, and discussed Norah's cookery as merrily and cheerfully as if they were in Maantee's bamboo-house on lovely Erma, and the nearest cannibal Dajian was eighty long miles away.

"Crept cautiously up behind that big rock."

Digitized by Google

"That," said O'Neill, "seems the best blow out I've ever had in the whole course of me chequered career. A shaugh of a pipe an' another smile from me Norah's pretty face is the only two things left to make bliss perfect. An' as I can't have the one, I'm going to ask for double allowance of the other. Darlint," he went on, regarding the pretty blushing creature with most affectionate gaze, "I'm prouder of yez than man ever was of woman before; an' it's me firm belief that there's not another girul between here an' Timbuctoo on the one side, an' Chaney on t'other, that would dare what you've done this day. Plaze heaven av we're spared to get back to Erma, his honour the king shall marry us fairly and tightly, an' av I don't make yez a good, kind husband, may I be put out of the world I don't desarve to live in."

Sneyd felt himself somewhat *de trop*, and got up to go, but the warm-hearted Irishman stopped him. "Don't you run away," he exclaimed. "What I said was for all hands to hear. An' besides," he went on in English, "there's another thing. This is an awkward situation for a pretty young girl to be in, trapezing about the country wid her lover an' another single man. Av coorse, these islanders don't think as we do about such matters. They'd throuble their heads very little about it. But dacency's dacency, an' me father always brought me up to respect it. He used to say when I was a gossoon, 'Murtagh, ye young blayguard, be honest av ye can, be prosperous av yez can manage it, be good av they'll let yez; but be dacent whether yez can or can't.' An' those is words I've never forgotten. The girl's goin' to be me wife some day av we get out of this infernal place, but till then I'll thrate her as though she were me own sister, and nothing more or less, heaven help me. And you, you're a gentleman, an' it's the good shipmate you've been to me, come storm, come fine weather; you'll help me to that?"

"I'll be a brother to her also, Murtagh O'Neill. There's my fist on it."

The two exchanged a hard hand-grip, and looked one another steadily in the face for a full minute. Then they turned to talk again to the girl, and the subject was never re-introduced.

CHAPTER III.

How the storming party was repulsed: how the retreat was continued to the mountain tops: how a raid was made for food: and how the Chief Sorcerer came to a bad end.

The night was dark with heavy clouds. A thick rain was driving up the valley. Both Europeans had left their cosy lair, and were spending the night in the open. They might have taken the watch in turn; but each, through an unspoken feeling of delicacy, professed his desire to remain on the look-out. One certainly did lie down for an hour under the big boulder which served to shield them when they reconnoitred in the daytime, whilst the other peered into the blackness over the brink; and so turn and turn about they did manage to snatch a few winks of sleep. But Sneyd had just roused his companion, and the two of them were crouching at the edge of the precipice with every sense on the alert.

"I can hear nothing," the Irishman remarked in a hoarse whisper, after listening intently for a minute or so.

"They are doubtless coming cautiously, and the howling of the wind and the hissing of the rain drown all sounds. But I'm certain that I heard the rattle of a falling stone just before I woke you."

They listened again with all their ears, but no sound could be heard above the swishing of the gale, and the dull monotonous roar of the waterfall. They strained their eyes, but save for the glistening of the wet on the rocks near them, they could see nothing through the deep thick gloom. Their sight could not penetrate the darkness half-a-dozen yards.

"I'm sure that stone wouldn't have toppled down of its own accord," Sneyd mused half aloud, half to himself.

As the murmured words left his lips a black cloud slid past the moon, and a stream of light shot down as though from the opening of a small round trap door away in the heavens. The whole gully was lit up in the instant. It swarmed with naked armed men. Two were scrambling on to the very last step but one of the ascent. The others were moving steadily up behind them.

When the moonlight shone out, each savage instinctively glanced upward, and saw on the brink of the fall, the two white men they had hoped to surprise during their sleep. The pair had risen to their feet as the gentle glare shot out, each holding a huge fragment of rock poised above his head. The savages saw their danger, and several of them tried to retreat. But they were too late. The stones were let fall. One crashed heavily on the rock, and bounding out into the air, flew harmlessly down far over their heads. But the other, truer to its aim, smashed on to an arm of the foremost climber and made him loose his hold. His body reeled backwards, clearing with it him on whose shoulders he stood. The two of them rolled down the steep descent, carrying involuntary havoc as they went; knocking savage after savage from his hold, and reaching the bottom in company with no less than seven other mangled corpses. Again rocks were hurled through the wet night wind, and again the same red drama was re-enacted. The white men were merciless, remorseless. Black clouds slid over the moon again, and the scene was wrapped in dense obscurity. But the avalanche of rock was kept up with unremitting zeal. The Europeans felt that it was no time to offer quarter, and so they gave none. Throwing the lighter stones into the air, rolling the heavier rocks laboriously over the brink of the precipice, they kept up the Titan's hailstorm till the pale lamp on high once more emerged from the obscuring veil.

Then pausing for a moment in their work, they looked down the line of the fall. The black slimy rock was starred with white in every direction where the great stones had cannoned from point to point in their fierce course. Here and there a naked body lay stark still and bruised on a ledge. But at the bottom was the most gruesome sight of all. Scattered over an area twenty yards in diameter were the rest of the savages, lying singly, or in mangled heaps, some, in pools of water, some uncovered, some pressed into the earth by a rude weight of jagged rock; but all motionless, all dead. Every member of the force had been slain. Yes, they looked away down the desolate valley, and scrutinised the cliffs of the fall again—not one had escaped to tell the tale.

Sneyd shuddered. Such awful slaughter appalled him. He was used to seeing death in a good many uncomely shapes, and he had often and often killed his man, and thought nothing of it in the heat of combat. He had seen an ugly shamble at Culloden Moor, in the 'tween decks of the *Sta Thérèsa*, and at other places. But he had never personally swept so many human beings into eternity at one stroke, as it were, as he had helped to do just now.

Some words to this effect escaped his lips.

The Irishman turned on him almost fiercely. "An' you're wishin' some o' them could have escaped?" he cried. "Begob it's meself that would like to see the whole thribe lyin' stark and stiff at the cliff-foot there. When I think what they'll do to me poor girl, av they can lay their murtherin' hands on her, I have no pity. I'd kill 'em when I catch 'em, just as I'd kill muskitties."

"We shall have the whole island at our heels, when this night's work comes to be known."

O'Neill shrugged his shoulders.

"They're all afther us as 'tis. So it can't be worse. Better, in fact, for we've thinned them down a thrifle. But as no one got off, their friends won't know what's happened for a day or two. Then they may send out others to inquire how matters is goin' along, and when they come to the cliff-foot here, what little the birds have left of their dirty

carcasses, will tell the tale pretty plainly. They'll learn to treat us wid more respect, after that, an'll come at us wid caution. But we will be far enough away by the time they do start, and they'll have to find us before they can try to do anything worse."

"Well, there's nothing to keep us standing out here in this cold rain any longer," said Sneyd. "We shan't be disturbed for the rest of the night, and for the whole of to-morrow, at any rate; so we may as well turn in now, and get a good long sleep, whilst we have the chance. Heaven knows when the next opportunity may occur."

"Slape's the best thing for us," assented the Irishman, turning away towards their shelter with his companion. "But don't tell Norah how we've been spendin' our evening. 'Twould do no good; an' although the poor darlint isn't squeamish—thanks to the devilment she's been forced to see these past two months—it's best to kape her in the dark as much as possible, about the hot way these blayguards are chasin' afther us."

They crept through the narrow opening into their den, raked up the smouldering embers of the fire, and replenished it with fresh fuel; and then, lying down in the warmth, were quickly asleep.

The sun was high up in the heavens when they woke. The tired girl was slumbering still, and as there was no need for it, they did not disturb her, but going outside, collected a fresh supply of eggs for their breakfast.

"The nests we emptied yesterday are replenished again, so this time we can be sure of getting none that are addled, and none that contain half-hatched chickens," observed Sneyd. "That's a great convenience."

"It would be av we intended to make a stay here."

"And why shouldn't we? They'd never dare to try and storm the position by the waterfall again."

"No, honest man, I'll grant yez that. But what 'ud yez say av the tables was turned? What av they climbed the cliffs above this little flat, an' began heavin' rocks down on us? How should we take the bombardment, eh? 'Twould be our turn then to look foolish, I'm thinkin'."

"True enough. What a dolt I was not think of it. But it never occurred to me that these rocks could be scaled from the other side."

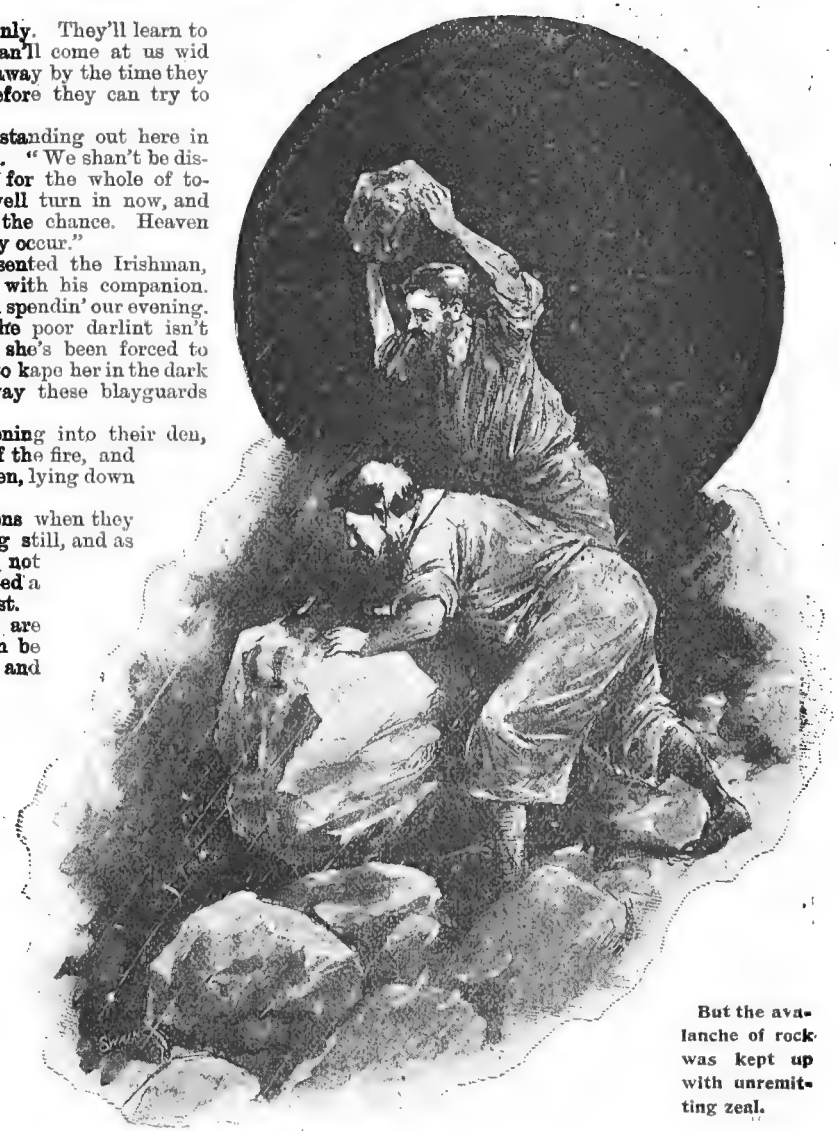
"P'raps they can't," O'Neill allowed. "But it wouldn't be wise to stay here on the chance of that same."

"It will be hard work getting out."

"'Twill. But we must do't, for all that. Luckily climbin' comes by nature to us sailor men; an' as Norah's pretty nimble, too, we ought to make a good shy at it. I'll grant yez it's not aisy to see which way we'll have to go from here; but we must hope to find out as we get higher up."

Taking with them as many hard-baked eggs as they could carry, they set off on the arduous climb, as soon as their meal was finished. The rain had ceased, but the gale still tore up the rocky valley and whistled round the crags with remorseless force. Overhead, the sky was thatched with leaden scurrying clouds.

Around, all was grey and cheerless. The little party of fugitives clambered up the steep ascent, foot by foot. The going was terribly bad. Often they had to make a long *détour* to get round a precipice, whose sheer front offered no foothold whatever. And more than once, being brought to a dead standstill, they were obliged to retrace their own steps, and try for a more feasible route.



But the avalanche of rock was kept up with unremitting zeal.

Whither this blind retreat would lead them they knew not. The mountains were barren in the extreme. There was not so much as a piece of lichen to clothe their bare and cheerless sides. But away up amongst those rocky fortresses, which were hidden in the grey cloud-vapour, they hoped to find a temporary asylum, where they would be quite secure from the prying eyes of bloodthirsty cannibals. So, with torn hands and blistered feet they struggled on, helping the woman with tender care, making light of the difficulties to be faced, and keeping up her spirits as best they could.

They got amongst the clouds soon after gaining the summit of the rocks above their last resting-place; and with the view circumscribed to twenty yards, they were often in danger of blundering terribly, if not fatally. But they couldn't halt and holding on in blind confidence that Providence, which had not deserted them so far, would still continue to stick by their side, finally got through the

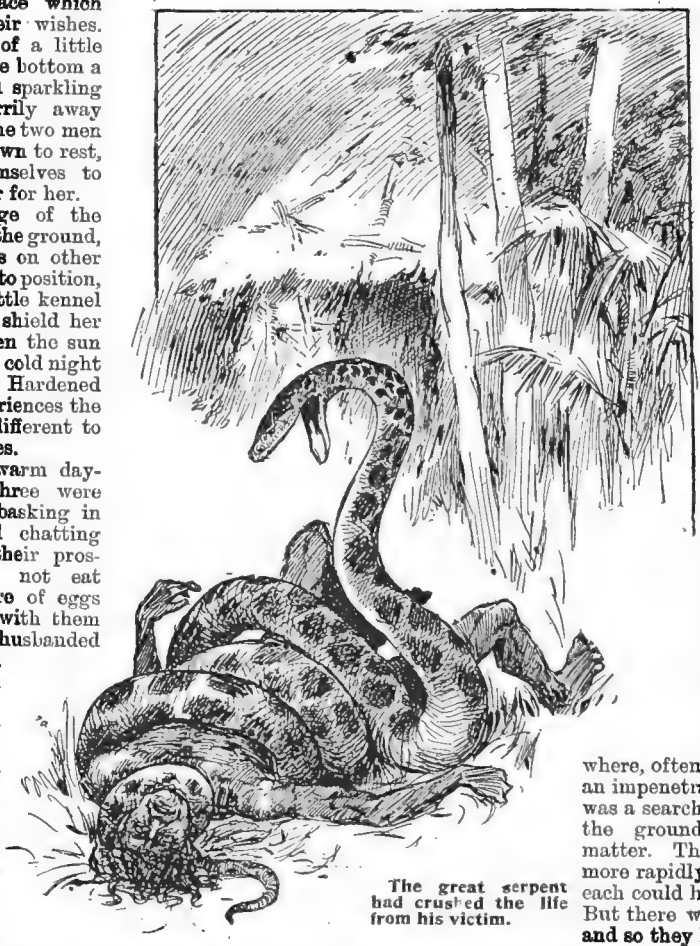
clammy belt of mist, and breathed the clear crisp air of the mountain-top.

Below, there was a vast, smooth, moving sea of woolly, white vapour, stretching in all directions as far as the eye could reach, till it met the dark-blue vault of the heavens, which was unflecked with traces of other cloud. Mountain peaks still rose jagged and steep above them, but as Sneyd remarked, there was no necessity to climb higher. "We must just hunt about for some secluded cranny where we can make a sheltered camp, and then set ourselves down and make things as comfortable as we can under the circumstances."

Not inclined to be over-fastidious, it did not take them long to find a place which accorded with their wishes. It was on the side of a little ravine, down whose bottom a slender rill of cool sparkling water tinkled merrily away over the stones. The two men made Norah lie down to rest, and then set themselves to build a rude shelter for her.

Taking advantage of the natural features of the ground, they piled boulders on other boulders already into position, and soon had a little kennel made that would shield her from the gusts when the sun went down, and the cold night air chilled them. Hardened by their past experiences the two men were indifferent to exposure themselves.

But while the warm daylight lasted, all three were very comfortable basking in the sunshine, and chatting hopefully about their prospects. They did not eat heavily. The store of eggs they had brought with them was small, and if husbanded to the utmost, could not last more than a couple of days. It would not do to make them spin out longer. They could not afford to grow weak through too great an insufficiency of food. After these were consumed, they must raid the lower country for fresh supplies. The mountain peaks were barren of food. The only thing they offered which would help to support life was water, and although that was in superabundant quantity, they could not nourish their bodies on it alone.



The great serpent had crushed the life from his victim.

"We are quite safe from the Dajians here," Sneyd said, after they had stayed there the two days, and consumed the last of their eggs. "They could not possibly follow our tracks. And a haphazard search amongst these endless hills would be absurd. Well supplied with food, we could lie snug here, till we one and all died of sheer old age. But that's just the rub. The food's run out, and starvation's as cruel an enemy as cannibals. The only question is, where are we to get the supplies from? For some reason best known to themselves, the gulls seem to have avoided all the valleys we tried yesterday. That's a nuisance, for their eggs are very tolerable feeding."

The clouds had cleared away, and the lower wooded parts of the island lay stretched out like a profile map below them.

"It seems pretty aisy goin' to the head of that glen yonder," said O'Neill, pointing the direction he meant with outstretched arm. "You and I might slip cautiously down, an' see av we can't lift something or other. We should come across plantains, or bananas, or oranges, or something o' that kind, an' av we don't, we must just go on till we find a yam garden or a taro patch, an' take our chance o' raidin' that widout being dropped upon."

"Very well," said Sneyd, "we'll just tell Norah, and start off at once,"—both of which they did.

Judging from their experiences of the adjacent island of Erma, the two confidently expected that when once they had descended to the level of the "timber line," they would have but little trouble in finding fruit-trees which would readily supply their wants. But as I have said before, Daji was not so favoured as Erma. Food did not grow on every bush. And every clump of palms, every thicket of plantains, every grove of orange trees, had its special owner, who jealously cared for his precious property.

The two Europeans walked rapidly down the bare mountain slopes, scrutinising the tree tops below them in hopes of spotting the familiar foliage of some clump of fruit trees. But being unsuccessful in this cursory search, they passed through the outlying scattered scrub, and plunged into the thick matted forest beyond.

Their progress was of necessity slow, for the undergrowth was rank and stony, and the rattans and lianes which were present everywhere, often bound the trees together into an impenetrable wall. But as their object was a search, and not a rapid passage over the ground, this did not particularly matter. They could have done their work more rapidly had they separated, for then each could have quartered a separate beat. But there were many reasons against this, and so they kept together.

The work was very hot. Little sunlight got through the matted crests of the trees, it is true, but the virgin ground was pulpy underneath, half swamp, half slime-pit. There rose up a thick steam, which no breath of wind could get at to blow away. The air was close and sultry, filled with a foul odour of decaying vegetation, heavy on the lungs. A great monitor lizard, on whose back Sneyd had inadvertently trodden, wriggled away from underneath him. He halted and shuddered involuntarily. "We might find eels in this filthy place," he said, "but not plantains."

"It's gettin' worse too," observed O'Neill. "We shall be comin' in amongst mangrove bushes next."

"We must move away in a fresh direction. The only question is, which? I have lost my bearings altogether. There isn't a breath of wind to guide one, or anything."

Digitized by Google

"We must just sthrike out an' try to find higher ground. Stay a minute, I'll nip aloft, and take a look round."

The Irishman circled the stem of a tall cottonwood tree with a length of rattan, and climbed it native fashion, till he got amongst the branches. Then putting his impromptu rope on a place of safety in readiness for the descent, he ran up the natural steps with a sailor's nimbleness, and disappeared amongst the foliage.

Presently he scrambled back again, and slipping down the smooth trunk at a pace that was scarcely compatible with safety, stood on the oozy soil beside his companion.

"What is it?" Sneyd asked, seeing from the other's face that there was something of considerable moment in the wind.

The Irishman had already turned off, and was tearing recklessly through the undergrowth as fast as his giant strength would let him. "Come along, or we'll be too late. It's close here. You'll see when we get there."

The communication was mysterious, but Sneyd knew his companion would not act as he was doing without a full and sufficient reason. So he followed without demur, and helped to tear aside the interlacing plants that barred their mutual progress.

Panting with their efforts, half stifled with the rank moist heat, bone-weary both of them, they struggled on and on, till at last exhaustion brought O'Neill, iron-muscled though he was, to an involuntary halt.

"Is it much further?" Sneyd demanded.

"Unless I've lost me bearings, we should be almost on it now."

"It—what?"

"A wee clearing. There's——"

"Never mind telling any more. Let me come to the front. I've got a bit of go left in me still for an emergency."

So Lawrence Sneyd fought the tangle of plant stems with all his remaining strength, and just as he, too, was coming to an involuntary halt, he saw through the thick foliage of a flowering bush an open space close ahead of him. Thrusting aside the intervening leaves, his glance fell on a sight that nearly froze him with horror. Before a small and squalid hut was a native tightly wrapped in the glistening folds of a huge anaconda. The great serpent had crushed the life from his victim, and was preparing to devour him. As Sneyd looked, the two massive jaws with their rows of instanding teeth opened, and approached the prey.

Fascinated by the sight of the reptile, he had up to this moment scarcely noticed anything besides. But his gaze fell on the victim just as the head was being sucked down.

Great heavens! Those bleared eyes glaring with an unnatural stare, and sensuous nostril, that cruel mouth. It was Ebry's, their enemy Ebry, by whose treachery they had fallen into the hands of the Dajians.

(To be continued.)

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.

WITHOUT doubt there are many readers of *S.S.* who heartily sympathise with the FRESH AIR FUND, but are unable to subscribe to it. It is now possible for them to do so, for everybody must use soap. To help the Fund, Messrs. Jeyes' Sanitary Compounds Company Limited, have promised to hand over a farthing on every 2½d. bar of their "Fresh Air" soap sold in the United Kingdom during the current year. It can be had from the vendors of such commodities all over the country. But if any of our readers experience difficulty in getting supplies, they should write to the Company, at 64 Cannon Street, London, E.C.

LADIES WHO PLAY

any instrument, and who have a liking for music, may turn their ability to good account by reading the article on "Ladies Orchestras" in PEARSON'S WEEKLY, dated March 11th, 1899.

During the coming summer months there will be ample opportunities for giving indoor and open-air concerts, not only in inland towns and villages, but on the coast, and the writer of this article shows the way to go to work.

WHO IS YOUR DOUBLE?

AMONGST the many, many thousands of readers of *P. W.*, there are surely several who very closely resemble one another, and I want to find out who they are. For this purpose I am going to ask you to send in your photograph to this office, and I shall give a sovereign to each of the five pairs of competitors who look most alike—£10 in all.

It will be a very interesting thing to you to find whether there is any person who weekly peruses the same pages as yourself and who bears a strong facial resemblance to you. This you can now find out by sending in your photograph.

The competition will remain open until Monday, March 20th, and all attempts must be sent in envelopes marked "LIKENESS."

If the photographs are to be returned, each must be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope sufficiently large to carry them. Under no circumstances will they be returned if stamps alone are sent. While every endeavour will be made to guard against loss or damage, the Editor does not make himself responsible for either.

NOT ONE MAN IN A THOUSAND

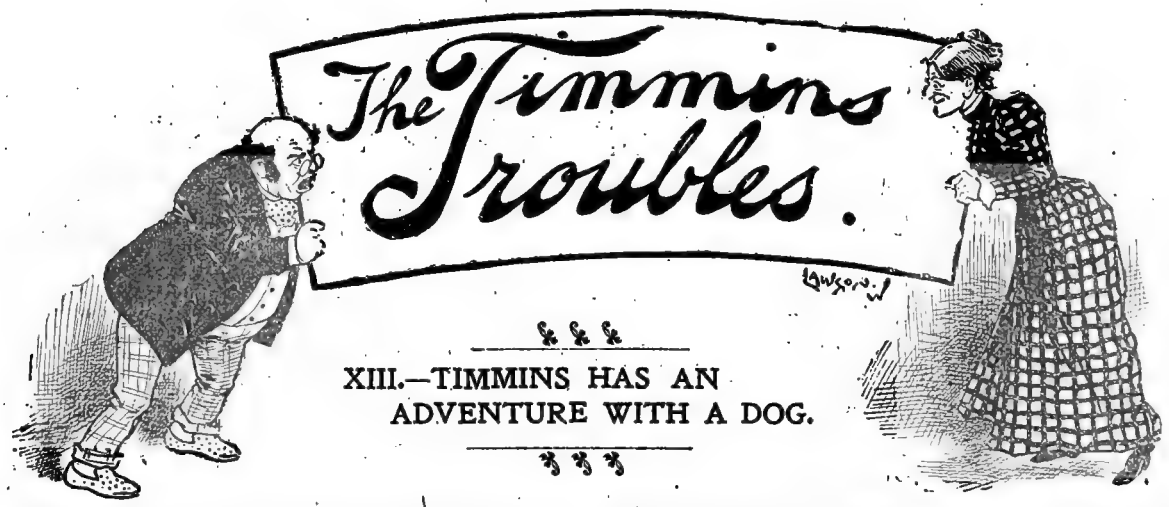
has a library worth speaking of. The difficulty of obtaining good books at a nominal price has been, in the past, unsurmountable. Tens of thousands of men and women have stocked their brains with knowledge obtained from books that have been borrowed from lending libraries, or from friends. How many of these tens of thousands ever thought that the day would come when they would be able to obtain for a weekly payment of 5s.—extending over a few months—one hundred of the most famous books ever given to the world? Yet this is what we are offering you to-day, and although, figuratively speaking, we shall be offering you this to-morrow, we cannot promise—so large has been the demand and so great the tax on our resources—that we shall be offering you this the day after to-morrow. In short, we would strongly urge you to decide as rapidly as possible, whether you will or will not entertain the idea of taking advantage of this truly excellent offer. Perhaps, though, you have not the list by you. If this is the case a postcard will bring one along by return of post, together with all the necessary particulars. Anyway, a halfpenny postcard won't break you, and the list is worth keeping among your papers for reference.

Meanwhile, we would ask you to bear in mind the all-important fact that

Go North, or South, or East, or West,
You can't improve the Hundred Best.

All communications to be made to "Best Books Department," C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google



XIII.—TIMMINS HAS AN ADVENTURE WITH A DOG.

"Look here, my dear," said Mr. Timmins, as he led a huge and shaggy dog into his wife's room, "I've got a dog a friend of mine gave me. What do you think of him?"

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Timmins, mounting a chair in dismay. "Is he mad?"

"No, Mrs. Timmins," retorted her husband. "he not only is not mad, but he isn't a step-ladder either, nor a bird's eye view. He's a dog, and if you don't get down off that chair he'll probably bite your leg off."

Mrs. Timmins got down on her feet and eyed the brute with some trepidation.

"Maybe he's got the hydrophobia," she suggested, by way of a hearty welcome.

"P'raps he has," agreed Mr. Timmins, "but if he has he's got it in his pocket. Come here, doggee, doggee," and Mr. Timmins snapped his fingers persuasively.

"Why doesn't he come when you call him?" asked Mrs. Timmins, deeply interested in the proceedings.

"Because you make such a noise you scare him," explained Mr. Timmins. "Come, doggee, doggee!"

"I don't quite like the way his tongue hangs out," objected Mrs. Timmins. "It doesn't look natural."

"Maybe you don't like the way his tail hangs out, either. P'raps you think that's artificial, too. With your information about dogs you only need a tiled floor and a broken hinge to be a dog pound. Keep quiet, now, while I teach him some tricks. Come here, doggee! Sit up, sir."

The dog stretched out his forelegs, opened a mouth like a folding bedstead, and growled.

"What makes him do that?" asked Mrs. Timmins, sitting on the back of the chair with her feet in the seat.

"Why?" shrieked Mr. Timmins. "Who do you suppose made him do it? Do you think he works on a wire? Have you got a notion that he goes by steam? He doesn't. I tell you he's alive, and he does it because that's the bent of his mind. What are you sitting up there for? Can't you see he doesn't like it? Now you sit still. Here, doggee, doggee, good doggee, sit up and beg!" and Mr. Timmins held up an admonitory finger.

The dog eyed Mr. Timmins with anything but an assuring glance.

"He's hungry," suggested Mrs. Timmins. "Dogs do like that when they want to be taken down the yard and fed."

"Of course you know," grumbled Mr. Timmins. "All you want is perfect ignorance on the part of the police to be a dog-fight. Got anything in the house for him to eat?"

"There's some cold stew and a piece of custard."

"That's it!" raved Mr. Timmins. "That's what's the matter with the dog. He wants custard. You've got it. You only need a committee and a fight over the proceeds to be a dog show. Where's the custard? Haven't you got some cold coffee? Give him a lemon to stay his stomach!" and Mr. Timmins jumped straight up into the air and landed on the dog. The dog made for the open air with a howl, and Mr. Timmins gathered himself up and looked after his prize.

"Never mind, my dear," said Mrs. Timmins soothingly, "he'll come back."

"If he does, I'll kill him!" shouted Mr. Timmins. "See what you've done? You've made me lose my dog and tear my trousers. Is there anything more about dogs you don't know? Have you got any more intelligence to impart about dogs? All you want is a bucket of brandy round your neck and a snowstorm to be a monk of St. Bernard," with which logical conclusion Mr. Timmins began exploring his outlying districts for possible bites, while his wife speculated upon the salvation of the cold stew and the custard by the sudden and eminently satisfactory disappearance of the dog.

Digitized by Google

THE GLEN ECHO MYSTERY.

Six months ago, through the death of a kinsman in the north of England, a lot of old pictures, furniture, *bric-à-brac* and papers came into my possession. Most of these were stored away in the garret of my house. One day, having occasion to go to the storeroom, my attention was attracted to an old-fashioned, battered leather trunk.

I had often thought of satisfying my curiosity as to its contents, but had never been able to find a key that would fit the lock. This day, however, it occurred to me that the ancient leather contrivance was of no value, and that a knife would do quite as well as a key; so I whipped out my pocket-knife and ripped a long slit in the leather top.

Within I found a large number of packets of old letters, account books and diaries, and all sorts of manuscripts and pamphlets.

All these I tumbled out on the floor, and looked through them in an idle way. At first I found nothing of unusual interest; but soon I came to a packet of peculiar shape.

It was apparently a sort of home-made envelope, composed of two pieces of old-fashioned blue linen paper folded and glued together. Upon the face of the packet was inscribed these words:

STRICTLY PRIVATE.

Never to be opened by anyone but me.

HENRY STONE.

This was the signature of my dead kinsman, and I suppose I should have respected his injunction; but I did not.

My curiosity was stronger than my reverence for the dead, so I slit open the packet.

Now I wish I had not done so. By prying into the secrets of the past, accidently placed within my keeping, I had come face to face with a mystery which appals me. For days and days and nights and nights I have turned it over in my mind, have looked at it from every point of view, have analysed, searched, thought, imagined. But it has been all in vain. I am completely baffled. So are my friends to whom I have submitted the matter. Our combined ingenuity fail to afford a solution.

What I found within the packet of old blue linen paper was simply the following three cuttings from newspapers of long ago:

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE AT GLEN ECHO.

"POUGHKEEPSIE, Oct. 20.—The police officials here and detectives from Chicago are unable to throw any light upon the mysterious disappearance of Sylvester Baldwin from the house of our esteemed fellow-townsman, Professor Edwin Stone, who lives in the old Stone Manor House, at Glen Echo, one of the picturesque suburbs of this city. Mr. Baldwin strangely disappeared last Sunday night, and though diligent search has been made for him during the the forty-eight hours that have elapsed, not a single clue has been obtained.

"Mr. Baldwin's home is in England. He came about two weeks ago to visit Professor Stone, who was his classmate at Cambridge. He was about twenty-five years of age, and a rising young lawyer. Mr. Baldwin was unmarried, but it is whispered that he has become engaged since his arrival here.

"Almost every day the guests had indulged in picnics, boating excursions, fishing, horseback-riding, and other amusements. Mr Baldwin was the life of the party with his vivacity, wit, and love of fun.

"On many of these excursions it was impossible for Professor Stone to go, as it is well known that in his laboratory, located on the roof of the Manor house, he is carrying on some important experiments. When he felt compelled to remain in his workshop, Professor Stone designated Mr. Baldwin to act as his representative in the entertainment of the party.

"Sunday last the ladies and gentlemen, accompanied by Professor Stone's aged mother, with whom he lives, attended divine service in the morning, and spent the afternoon in walks and drives.

"Toward evening, the weather growing colder, they all assembled in the big dining hall, where they made a rousing log fire in the old-fashioned fireplace. They had refreshments and music, and Mr. Baldwin's fine baritone voice was never heard to better advantage.

"About ten o'clock, after planning their excursion for the next day, all retired to their rooms on the second floor.

"Mr. Baldwin was heard by Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and

Digitized by Google

by Miss Davidge, guests who occupied adjoining rooms, to enter his chamber a few moments after they had reached their own apartments.

"He was whistling softly and humming an air, indicating the happy condition of his mind. He was also heard closing a window, and closing and latching the outside blinds.

"Between the apartment of Mr. Baldwin and that occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Jones there is a door, somewhat warped by time, and through the cracks and the big, old-fashioned keyhole Mr. Jones heard Mr. Baldwin bounce into bed; but as the light in his room was not extinguished, as Mr. Jones noticed when he put out his own light and retired, the supposition is that Mr. Baldwin was reading in bed before going to sleep, as was his habit.

"From that moment not the slightest trace of the young lawyer has been secured. The last known about him, he was apparently lying in bed, reading, a happy man. Next morning he was not in his room. All his clothing and effects, save only the pyjamas which he wore as a night robe, were in the apartment. He had disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him.

"It is inconceivable that Mr. Baldwin suffered an attack of mental aberration and wandered away, for there had been a light fall of snow that evening and no tracks were found in it round the house. The barn and outbuildings, as well as every nook and cranny of the manor house, were carefully searched. The police looked under the hayricks, and even lowered a man into the wells.

"They scoured the country around, but no one had seen or heard of a man wandering about in his pyjamas. If Mr. Baldwin left the house, he went away without shoes, hat, or clothing; and as cold weather has prevailed since his disappearance, it is almost inconceivable that he has not been obliged to apply for shelter or food during the last forty-eight hours.

"The detectives do not believe that Mr. Baldwin left the house. The morning after his disappearance the shutters in his room were all found fastened on the inside. So, too, were the front door and the rear or kitchen door of the house. All were locked with the keys in place inside. The detectives have satisfied themselves that the fall of snow on Sunday evening ceased about nine o'clock, and it would have been impossible for Mr. Baldwin to wander away, or be carried away, without leaving traces of footsteps.

"But neither Mr. Baldwin living nor Mr. Baldwin dead is to be found in the house now. The search has been thorough from cellar to garret. Professor Stone's laboratory upon the roof has been thoroughly ransacked. As is known to our citizens, Professor Stone is engaged in investigations in connection with a new illuminating process and also in the water-proofing of fabrics. For these purposes he keeps upon the roof quite a collection of apparatus, retorts, gas generators, a large lot of fabric, some of which has been chemically treated, tools, fine instruments, etc. Professor Stone says he was in his laboratory hard at work the night his friend disappeared. No other member of the family or any of the guests heard Mr. Baldwin's steps that fateful night. Professor Stone insisted that the detectives should thoroughly search his laboratory. The officers opened the gas machines, sifted the cinders in all the retorts and overhauled all the piles of fabric. They found not the slightest trace of the missing man, dead or alive.

"Professor Stone and all the members of his house party, so merry a few days ago, are bowed down with grief. They not only fear that Mr. Baldwin is dead, but they are overwhelmed by the mystery which surrounds them. They feel that they are living within the shadow of a tragedy which has not been explained and which thus far is wholly inexplicable."

"MYSTERY PILED UPON MYSTERY.

"Poughkeepsie, October 22nd.—The mystery of the disappearance of Silvester Baldwin is not yet cleared up. In fact, it grows deeper and darker. This morning a telegram was received from Saratoga. It read as follows:—

Chief of Police, Poughkeepsie.—Body of man in night-clothes found last Monday morning at daylight by a mail carrier on bridle-path in the Adirondacks about one hundred miles from here. What was date of your man's disappearance?

City Marshal.

"To this, Chief of Police Kipley replied, giving the date of Mr. Baldwin's disappearance, and adding: 'Impossible same man.'

"Of course, it is impossible, and yet it is a most strange and striking coincidence. Have two men disappeared in their pyjamas during the past week? This most extraordinary development did not impress Chief Kipley as having any bearing upon the Baldwin case. When asked if there could possibly be any connection between the two incidents he replied:—

"'It is absurd to think there was. Mr. Baldwin disappeared after ten o'clock on Sunday night. Early next morning the body of a man was found in the Adirondacks, two hundred miles from here. There is no railway nearer than Saratoga. It is a journey of about two days from the place where the body was found to the nearest railway station, and that is by mounted courier. A waggon would need four days over these rough roads. It was a physical impossibility for the body of Mr. Baldwin to be carried to that remote point in the Adirondacks by next morning, and, therefore, we do not need to discuss this phase of the case any farther. The body found in the mountains is that of some other man.'

"Chief Kipley is undoubtedly right. Your reporter has ascertained that the only train for the north after Mr. Baldwin retired to his room was the midnight express, which does not make connections at Albany or Saratoga. The earliest possible arrival at Saratoga would have been at ten o'clock on Monday morning, and that is still one hundred miles by a rough mountain road from the place where the body was found, according to the telegram, at daylight on Monday morning.

"Notwithstanding the utter impossibility of there being any connection between the two incidents, Miss Davidge, who has taken much to heart the strange fate of Mr. Baldwin, has insisted that careful investigation be made of the Adirondack case. In this she is supported by Professor Stone, and by others at Glen Echo house. Their anxiety is so great that they grasp at straws. Chief Kipley, to humour their strange whim, has agreed to send a man to the mountains to inquire carefully into the finding of the body there, though protesting that it is useless expense and trouble.

"Chief Kipley is still convinced, as are all the detectives who have worked on the case, that Mr. Baldwin, living or dead, is still in the manor house. He has expressed his belief to Professor Stone, and the latter has insisted on a more thorough search. In consequence, the old house has been nearly pulled to pieces. Partitions have been cut down, floors ripped up, walls opened,

Digitized by Google

the floor of the cellar dug up, and the ashes and cinders in every furnace and stove, including the retorts in Professor Stone's laboratory, have been subjected to chemical analysis by Professors Tausig and Brunier, of the Polytechnic School. The barns and outbuildings, strawstacks and wells, have all been researched. Every scrap of paper in Mr. Baldwin's room has been scrutinised. All the inmates of the house have been subjected to another examination, but without disclosing any new facts. Not a single trace of Mr. Baldwin or of the manner in which he left or was taken from his room, not even a shadow of a clue, has been discovered."

MR. BALDWIN'S BODY FOUND.

An Astounding Case.

"Saratoga, October 26th.—The body found in the Adirondacks a week ago this morning was that of Silvester Baldwin, after all. It has been positively identified by Professor Stone, Mr. and Mrs. Jones and Miss Irene Davidge, who came here to view it, accompanied by your reporter. But instead of clearing up the mystery, this discovery has darkened it into one of the most inexplicable crimes of the century.

"All we know now is that Mr. Baldwin is dead; that he disappeared from his room in the manor house at Glen Echo after ten o'clock on Sunday night, the 8th inst.; that his body was found at daylight next morning 200 miles away, a 100 miles from the nearest railway; and that he must have been fouly murdered.

"Detective Brown, who was sent by Chief Kipley to investigate the Adirondack case, reached Saratoga last Friday morning, and by hard riding over the mountain roads arrived at Cascadeville on Saturday evening. There he found the body, which had been brought in from a point eight miles north. Mr. Brown closely questioned the mail-carrier who had found the body about six o'clock Monday morning, on his way from Lake Placid. There was no doubt as to the day and hour, as these were attested by the mail carrier and others.

"When Givins came upon the body it was lying in the road. His horse was frightened by it. The remains lay in a sort of heap, and were not yet quite cold.

"The skull was smashed, the neck broken, and the head driven into the shoulders. Many bones in the body and limbs were broken, indicating that the remains may have been tightly packed in a box or crammed into a cask.

"The only clothing upon the corpse was a suit of silken pyjamas, tied around the waist with a cord of the same material.

"The deceased had never been seen in that region, nor was any one known to be missing. The population is sparse, and every tourist and sportsman is known along the trails to the guides, boatmen, and innkeepers. No man could carry a human body to that remote spot save on the back of a horse, and no mysterious horseman or other person was reported from any part of the district.

"The manner in which the body has made its appearance in the midst of the mountains was as much of a mystery to the people there as the means by which it had been removed from Poughkeepsie was to Detective Brown.

"Detective Brown had known Mr. Baldwin, and as soon as he saw the body he was convinced of its identity. Accordingly he sent a messenger with a telegram to Chief Kipley, and hired two men and two horses to help him to carry the remains to Saratoga. They arrived here at three o'clock this afternoon, and there was a sad scene when our party from Poughkeepsie were admitted to the undertaker's rooms to view the body. Everyone at once recognised in the broken and mangled mass of flesh, handsome, manly, Silvester Baldwin. Professor Stone was greatly agitated when he beheld the features of his college chum and best friend, and Miss Davidge uttered a cry of pain and would have swooned had not Mrs. Jones led her away.

"The face of the deceased is natural. In one of the front teeth is a gold filling just such as Mr. Baldwin had in one of his front teeth. The silken pyjamas are precisely like Mr. Baldwin's, and, moreover, his initials, 'S. B.,' are embroidered upon a little linen tag under the neck. The name of the maker, a Boston firm, is there, too. Still stronger proof of the identity of the remains, if any were needed, is found in the fact that in a pocket of the pajamas was discovered a locket containing the miniature of Miss Irene Davidge.

"There is, therefore, not the slightest doubt whatever, that this is the body of Silvester Baldwin. There can be no doubt either, that he was murdered. But how and by whom? And above all, how was his body carried in six or seven hours, some two hundred miles from his room in the manor house at Glen Echo to that lonely spot in the mountains, to reach which a journey of two days is required, even under the most favourable circumstances?

"It cannot be possible that the body which we have here is that of another man. It is beyond reason to suppose that there was a simultaneous disappearance of two men, both wearing silken pyjamas alike, the two men resembling one another in figure, face, colour of eyes and hair, teeth and everything as closely as if they were twins, both bearing the initials "S. B." and both carrying in their pockets a minature of Miss Irene Davidge, of New York.

"Every one is greatly depressed, not only on account of Mr. Baldwin's sad fate, but by the inexplicable mystery surrounding the dreadful tragedy. The doctors and the professors who have carefully examined the body and subjected part of its raiment to microscopic tests are without any explanation, however shadowy and unsatisfactory. Have the Black Arts been revived, or must we ascribe this extraordinary tragedy to the working of some modern miracle?"

This is the strange story my curiosity had unearthed from the recesses of my dead kinsman's trunk. You will now see why I am sorry I disobeyed the injunction which I found written upon the blue packet. The tale which these old newspaper clippings tell has wrung in my ears and whirled about in my brain, robbing me of sleep and making me nervous and restless. I have searched the old trunk again and again for further light upon it, but without success. I have had a feeling that somehow or other I must discover the dread secret, for this tragedy was in my family. Not only did it occur, or at least have its beginning, in the house of my kinsman, but, now that the circumstances have been brought so strikingly to my attention, I recall that my relation, Professor Stone, married the Miss Davidge who figures in the story, lived with her in happiness for many years, and reared a fine family of boys and girls. Though I had never known either Professor Stone or his wife, Mr. Henry Stone, their brother, who left to my charge the fateful trunk, has told me of the professor's successful and useful career and happy home life.

But all my efforts have been unavailing. I am unable to find a clue or even to evolve a satisfactory theory. I can only give my readers the facts and leave them to struggle with the problem, as I have struggled.

Postscript: "The foregoing was written some months ago. Meanwhile I have made strenuous efforts to throw off the strange fascination which this mystery has exerted over me—to stop thinking and worrying over it; but to no purpose. It has continued to harass me. To-day, feeling more desperate than usual, I went up to the garret with a hatchet and a big knife, determined to cut the old trunk to pieces in order to discover if its shell contained any clue to the mystery. Underneath the lining in the bottom I found a letter, apparently no more than five or six years old, and dating from Scotland, which read as follows:

"My dear brother Henry:—I am writing this letter to you with my own hand, despite my physical weakness. It is the last letter I shall ever write to you, for I know my end is fast approaching. The doctor tells me I shall recover, but he cannot deceive me.

"I have, as you know, led a busy, useful, and successful life. My inventions have brought me distinction and reward There is only one thing in my career which I regret, and even that does not fill me with remorse. Once there came to me a moment in which all that life seemed to promise me—all happiness, success, and ambition—were involved in a struggle for mastery between two men—myself and another.

"It is the law of nature that when two forces come into collision the weaker must give way. Nature has thus established the principle of the survival of the fittest, the dominance of the superior over the inferior. It matters not whether the struggle comes between planets or molecules, men or animals, nations or tribes, the law is the same. No man can be above the law of his being and his surroundings; it is his right and his duty to work out his salvation within his sphere and under the principles which nature has ordained.

"And yet in my case that which I had to do was extremely disagreeable. I had to remove a man from my pathway. One or the other had to suffer a most grievous loss, a fatal disappointment; and when this clash of interests came I had the right, under nature's laws, to defend myself. The man whose life crossed mine, and whom it was necessary for me to remove, was my best friend, and, for the moment, my guest. These circumstances added to the unpleasantness of my task, but did not deprive me of my right of self-preservation—a right which exists in every living thing, from the humblest to the highest, and whose exercise nature restricts only with limitations of power.

"You may wonder, brother, why I write these words. I write them because it is not in my nature to die with my secret untold. All these years I have carried it alone, absolutely alone. An impulse which I can neither describe nor control leads me to share my secret with just one human soul; and of course he can be none but you, my dearest friend and brother, who has shared all his secrets with me.

"You will recall all the circumstances of the tragedy which happened at our house in Glen Echo shortly after I left college, and while you were in Europe. We have often talked them over in the past, and you, like everyone else, tried to solve the mystery. If you had only known what I knew!

"I loved Irene Davidge before Silvester Baldwin did. Before he and she met at our house I was passionately devoted to her. I made up the house party for the purpose of providing a good opportunity to press my suit, which I knew was not unpleasing. Before she returned home I had confidently expected she would be my promised wife. But from the first day that she met Baldwin I knew my star was setting and his was in the ascendant. He was rapid and prosperous in his love-making, and I was forgotten. In a week they were lovers. One day I saw him kiss her as they stood behind some rose bushes in the garden. Had I not been a philosopher, a man of cool, calm reasoning, I should have killed him there and then.

"But you know my self-possession, my absolute control of self, my favourite theory that he who can master himself can master the world. All that night I reasoned it out with myself. My conclusions, which to me then, as now, appeared logical, were as follows:

"1. Without her my life is ruined, as I know myself well enough to know I shall never love again.

"2. If he lives she will be his, and I, the superior man in all, save those superficial qualities which attract the other sex, shall be the loser in life's battle.

"3. Nature has ordained that the superior shall triumph, and therefore I have the right to remove him from my way.

"4. If I do remove him, in proper fashion, she will be mine, as she would have been mine had he not come between us. Therefore his removal will give me that which I must have.

"Conclusion: I will remove him.

"Action being determined upon, it only remained to decide the means. It was necessary that everything should be done in a prudent and orderly way. There must be no danger of discovery or even of suspicion being fastened upon me, for of course that would defeat the purpose in view. To obviate the possibility of pain or humiliation to our dead mother, or to you, my brother, was as much my duty as to protect the mind of Miss Davidge from being poisoned against me. Therefore, it was necessary to proceed only after thorough consideration of all the possibilities. A minor point, but still one worthy of attention, was that I should not be compelled to do any actual butchering with my own hands, nor have any gruesome scenes about me. Even in this supreme moment, when I was successfully to work out my destiny or utterly ruin myself, I could not overlook the fact that I was a gentleman. Nor could I take the risk of employing a confederate.

"In a few hours my plans were laid. I hope you will agree with me that they were laid with judgement, skill, and thoroughness, as became a man of science and self-possession. Fortunately I had in my laboratory all the materials needed for my operations. But there was much work to do. Day and night I toiled up there on the roof of the old house, where you and I afterwards passed so many happy hours while perfecting my inventions. I absented myself as much as possible from the house party, in part because I could not endure seeing him and her together, and in part because I needed all the time for my preparations. During a period of one hundred hours I took only as much sleep as one ordinarily gets in twenty-four.

"At last I was ready. I remember that it was Sunday noon, just after services, that I tested my work, reviewed all my calculations, and found nothing had been neglected. After dinner in the evening I spent some time with the party in the dining-room, and the loving glances exchanged between Silvester and Irene were

more endurable to me than they had hitherto been. Excusing myself about nine o'clock, I went upstairs. Entering Baldwin's room, I struck a match and found the book which he was engaged in reading. It was 'Horace's Odes,' from my library. I knew Silvester's habit of reading an hour before going to sleep—he formed it in college. Opening the volume to the bookmark, I turned over six pages and inserted there this note which I had prepared.

"'Dear Silvester:—If you are not too sleepy when you find this, come up to the laboratory. I have something important to show you.

E. S.'

"I calculated that it would take him a quarter of an hour to read from his bookmark to my note, and I felt sure he would come, as he had displayed much interest in my experiments, and had complained because of late I had admitted him so rarely to the laboratory. My only fear was that, in the time which I had given him, not all of the other people in the house would be asleep, as I naturally did not want anyone to know he had visited me. At the same time I dared not have placed the note farther on in the book, lest he should not reach it before falling asleep himself. Of course I could have deferred the removal till another night, but now wind and weather favoured, and I courted no delay.

"He came a few moments before eleven o'clock. I was ready for him.

"'Silvester,' said I, 'here is a machine I have built for experimental purposes, and I want you to help me test it.'

"'All right, Edwin,' he replied; 'what is it now?'

"'A new gas-holder, made of silk,' said I, 'and here is some of the new gas. Take a good whiff of it—it is like wine in the nostrils.'

"He took the metal flask which I handed him, turned the cock, and in a moment or two fell insensible at my feet. I had filled the flask with a combination of chloroform and hydrogen, under pressure, and when the cock was turned a cloud of most powerful anæsthetic fumes burst into his face.

"Now I was master of the situation. First I locked the door leading to the floor below. I noted with satisfaction that he had brought my note with him, thus saving me a perilous trip down to his room after it. I burned it in my furnace. A look at the anemometer showed a wind movement of thirty miles an hour, and I was glad to see that the barometer was still falling. If it had been possible for a man of my temperament to have faltered in a set purpose, the sight of the locket containing Irene's portrait which had fallen from the breast pocket of his pyjamas as he fell, would have served to have nerved me for my task.

"With your knowledge of thoroughgoing methods, dear brother, you will easily imagine how carefully I had planned everything. Sylvester's exact weight I had ascertained by a casual inquiry a few days before to be one hundred and sixty-two pounds. I assumed that he would come to me without stopping to dress, for he was hardy and athletic, and proud of his ability to endure exposure—an important point on account of the nicety of my calculations. The weight of the gas-bag was eighteen pounds; total, one hundred and eighty pounds, and of its lines and netting, five pounds; total, one hundred and eighty-five pounds. By careful test I had found the weight of my gas—it was nearly pure, dry hydrogen—was eighty thousandths of an ounce per cubic foot; and as air weighs one and two tenths ounces per foot, I had a net power of fully one and one tenth ounces per foot. The gas-bag was spherical, and a little more than eighteen feet in diameter, giving it a capacity of three thousand one hundred and fifty cubic feet, equal to two hundred and seventeen pounds lifting force.

"It was necessary to have a little margin, to compensate for loss of gas by leakage. Careful calculations of the rarity of the atmosphere at various altitudes showed me the bag with the burden would at first ascend to a height of about five thousand six hundred feet, where there would be an exact counterbalance of the weight of air displaced and the weight of the apparatus and its burden. Then it would slowly descend as the gas escaped from the bag. It was, of course, desirable that it should at first ascend to a great altitude, as that would prevent it being seen by anyone who might be astir. It was quite as desirable that the whole machine should remain in the air at least six hours, that it might be carried a proper distance away. At the same time, it must drop its burden before daylight—before anyone could see it and perchance understand its dread significance.

"It was highly important too, from my point of view, that the body should be found sooner or later, and be unmistakably identified; otherwise Irene might take it into her pretty head to do the romantic by waiting year after year for the possible re-appearance of her absent lover, which would be decidedly unpleasant for me. Hence I did not dare to arrange to send the apparatus out to sea, as I might easily have done. For the same reason I replaced in the pocket of Silvester's pyjamas the locket with Irene's miniature in it, which had fallen from it.

"It was absolutely necessary that the apparatus and its burden should not be found together, for in that case it would be easy to trace the two to a common source—to wit, my laboratory—thus defeating the purpose in view To obviate this danger I had made careful experiments in the effect of various acids upon fibres, and was able accurately, to determine the time in which a given quantity of diluted vitriolic acid would eat away a cord of given strength so that it would part under the strain of a weight of one hundred and fifty-six pounds. By this means I made sure that the apparatus and its burden should be separated before daylight, and the latter fall to earth, and the former, relieved of its incubus, to ascend to the skies and fly perhaps a thousand miles before coming down.

"Such a cord, twisted with acid and timed to sustain the load just six hours, I tied about the waist of Silvester and made fast to the netting beneath the gas-bag.

"The moment had come. Carefully I looked all about from the roof to see that no one was watching my operations, and noted with satisfaction that the night was extremely dark, and in all respects favourable to my purpose.

"At a quarter past eleven o'clock, Sunday evening, October 18, I took Silvester's living right hand in mine and pressed it with a farewell greeting. Then with three rapid slashes of my knife I cut the guy ropes of my little balloon, with the body of my rival dangling beneath it, darted upward and northward into the gale.

"Your affectionate brother,

"Edwin Stone."

* * * * *

Such was the secret of Silvester Baldwin's death. Was it to be expected that anything less than the diabolical craft and ingenuity that brought it to pass should penetrate the mystery?

Geo. Fenmore.

Google

THE BELLE OF THE R.M.S. "TREBIZOND."

I.

Plaisir d'amour dure pour un jour,
Chagrin d'amour dure pour la vie.
DU MAURIER (*Trilby*).

"It's a beastly bad bit of business, and the worst of it is a fellow can't do anything in it. Why on earth don't things slide round into their proper places in this world and not go fooling round trying to make square holes fit them when they know they are round?"

With such ill-expressed and badly-worded logic did Niels Barton soliloquise as he paced up and down his little cabin. Honest men are sometimes—nay, very often—slow of speech, and that was the only title Niels Barton claimed from the world. He had traversed every league of its sea and almost every country known; he had formed few ties that it would have caused him a pang to break; seen very few races that did not in some respect resemble his own, especially in their follies and vices.

Niels Barton had no quarrel with the world; he loved it well, but he had learned the approximate value of almost every factor that went to the making of it; learned to see everything in proper proportion, always and excepting one—*woman*.

He had been brought up with a profound respect for the sex, and, shaken as his faith had been in his wanderings, he had not yet lost sight of his ideal. He did not belong to the class of men who "like a woman who's a perfect fool," though he knew there were such and that they had succeeded in manufacturing just the very thing they wanted.

Niels Barton took himself seriously—too seriously, his friends thought—yet they all respected him for it; and it was with his characteristic soberness of mind that he thrashed out the question that now occupied his attention.

That question contained that most perplexing of paradoxes—a *woman*. Not that the one in question was even remotedly connected with his own fate; but another woman was; and that was the reason; so Niels Barton told himself that all women claimed his chivalrous attention.

His musings were interrupted presently by a cheery voice.

"What on earth are you muttering about, Barton?—you, the only optimist aboard as far as I can make out in spite of your solemn old face. Why, one would think you were expecting the Sydney *Mail* to contain the news of the sudden death of all your relations in one fell stroke."

"Talking of the mail, that reminds me, Thornburgh, that I must catch the homeward French packet to-morrow; we shall pass her coming out. You don't mind my being candid, old man, but just now you are in the way. Come in later, will you?"

And with the best of good graces Thornburgh departed, whistling as he went the latest air that had been imported from England.

Hugh Thornburgh was the first refrigerating engineer of the *Trebizond*, the greyhound of the Pacific, and now on her way from Vancouver to Sydney. In spite of (perhaps because of) their wide difference in character he and Barton, the second officer, were such chums.

Barton, to any casual observer, was not handsome. He possessed the Sonata kind of face that required studying to appreciate its beauty. Thornburgh, on the other hand, had what gushing young ladies call "the features of an Adonis."

There were others besides this superficial difference; the chief, perhaps, being that although Barton was three years the younger, Thornburgh possessed one of those boyish dispositions that made one prophecy on the shortest possible acquaintance that he would never be a man, while Barton gave one the impression that he had never been anything else.

It was white suit weather, and the *Trebizond* was only two days off port.

A fortnight since there had been added to the list of passengers—some two hundred odd of varied types of the human family—the Governor of New Zealand, Sir Philip Armstrong, and his only child, Cherith.

Young—she was barely nineteen; pretty—of the wax doll type of beauty; lively and accomplished, Cherith Armstrong was bound to be more than a cipher wherever she went. Needless to say, in her short reign on the *Trebizond*, she had been the cause of much speculation, many heartbreakings.

Among the saloon passengers, which included successful prospectors from Klondyke, Government officials, interesting couples on their honeymoon, intrepid old ladies, lively young ones, consumptive misanthropes, and globe-trotting elder sons, was one of the latter species, who attracted, and, what was more, demanded no little attention.

Hiram Jackson, of Boston and Philadelphia, was a man not to be lightly regarded. "When found make a note of," Captain Cuttle would, no doubt, have observed. Certainly one could hardly help making mental notes on him. His profusion of gold chain, his length of shirt cuff, the size of the check in his tweed suit, the quality of his cigars, and the dollars he spent daily at the first class bar were facts too much in evidence to be passed over.

The officers, most of whom were men of education and culture, got a vast amount of amusement out of him and the patronising airs he assumed towards them. Most of the passengers tolerated him with that air of *bonhomie* one usually finds among passengers on short voyages; a select few pointedly snubbed him; and others treated him with indifference.

Among the latter was Cherith Armstrong. She consented to be amused by him and his inane, vulgar boasting so long as it amused her, but when a winsome, handsome young officer was near Hiram received his *congé*.

Needless to say, this did not meet with his views of the fitness of things, and not long after Thornburgh left Barton to his thoughts and his mail, an interesting, though somewhat one-sided conversation was taking place in the reading room of the *Trebizond*.

Niels finished his letter, lighted his pipe, and commenced to pace his cabin. It was not a cheerful letter that he had written; but he wrote as the mood moved him, and it was a black, or at most a grey one to-day, for he had made a discovery.

Digitized by Google

When Cherith Armstrong had come on board there had been a lively discussion by the officers off duty, and all, with the exception of Barton, had been unanimous in giving her the title of the "belle of the ship."

"Oh, it's no use trying to convert an old Benedick like Barton," said Thornburgh, his champion. "He likes a woman with ideas, and I don't think we shall find the belle has any."

And in spite of the changes his mind had undergone in the ten days that followed, Barton was still ignorant of one idea at least that had taken root in her mind, and grown till it was a certainty with her, and that was that she loved Hugh Thornburgh.

It was a well-known fact to all on board that Cherith was on her way to her *fiancé*, the newly-made commissioner of lands and mines for Western Australia, and preparations were in progress for a society wedding in Sydney, to which end Lady Armstrong had gone in advance of her husband and daughter to arrange matters.

This fact it was, added to the double discovery that Thornborough was very hard hit, that had given Barton's face more than its usual seriousness on this sunny day in April.

It was the beginning of Australia's autumn, and the sun had begun to soften the intensity of its rays. It had been bearable—nay more, delightful—sitting on the quarter-deck that afternoon with Cherith Armstrong under the cool awning, but for the revelation that she had made to him.

Niels Barton could never understand why people confided in him as they did. It was deucedly awkward at times, he reflected, and this was one of them. Barton had never tried to borrow a little reflected glory from the Navy. He was quite proud enough of the service to which he belonged, in spite of the fact, so hard of realisation by a few restricted souls, that a man may be equally a man and a gentleman in the M.M.

As he had sat by the side of the fair, fragile little girl, whom he had found trying, or pretending to read, and listened to her little tale of woe, all the honour that was in him rose in revolt against a fate that seemed to be decreed.

He took the book from her listless hands, and had chosen one of Kipling's poems that he had taught her to understand and love. He had not read many lines before he found that to-day she was not listening; her blue eyes had a far away, misty look in them, and her delicately-veined hands locked and unlocked themselves nervously.

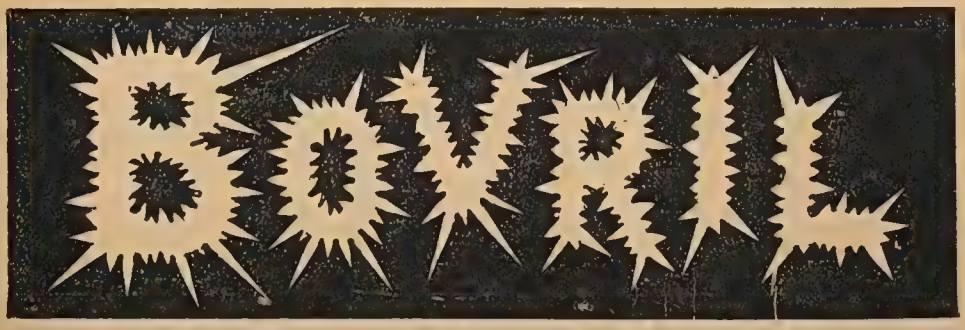
Presently she broke the spell of a silence that only the flutter of the leaves of the book had interrupted for some minutes.

"Mr. Barton, will you forgive me if I make a safety-valve of you? I must speak to someone, and I think you are the only one on board who would understand at all. I am going to confess.

"A fortnight ago I, Cherith Armstrong, was the girl you took me for—yes, don't contradict—I was, I know you did, and I deserve it; yet hear my defence. I was brought up to live for my own ends—my own amusement. I have made many conquests; so many that, when a year ago a new man out from England, came to Government House, my parents, who were getting tired of the responsibility, told me that he was the eligible *parti* whom I was to marry.

Influenza

is an insidious germ disease which lies in wait for those whose system is not in a condition to resist it. Even the healthy and strong must keep up the resisting power. In all cases Bovril is an invaluable safeguard; it maintains strength, vitality, body-warmth; it stimulates the circulation, and gives to the system that healthy tone without which it is an easy prey to the epidemic. A hot cup of Bovril between meals, and as a "night-cap" is all that is necessary.



"They had decided the question, and I acquiesed. I had no thought in the matter. You see, I had not been taught to think—only to amuse myself. I pinned my faith to the idea that so long as a girl had her fling it mattered little whom she married, so long as it was what the world called a good match, and I consented to be engaged.

"Only twice since have I seen the man I am to marry, and now I go to be his wife; but I swear to you solemnly that until I came on board the *Trebizond* I have never known what 'love' is."

She hesitated, flushing a deep crimson beneath her Leghorn hat with its masses of roses that matched the ribbons on her muslin dress. She was just a wee little bit of the daintiest Dresden china, Niels thought. It seemed sacrilege almost to touch her; and here, wonder of wonders, was the woman—the soul of the *woman* waking up, the gay butterfly whom he had decided had none. She went on with an effort:

"How could I help loving him? I know it's madness from any point of view but mine; but you—oh! you know him; he is your friend. Tell me, how could I help loving Hugh Thornburgh?"

Niels gripped the arm of her deck chair as in a vice.

"No," he said, "you couldn't help it. I grant you full absolution on that point."

"But you see," she went on, "how impossible it is. The mater is now in Sydney ordering my trousseau, and oh, think of me," she added pitifully, "at Warrimo—that's the pater's wedding gift to us, you know—seven miles from anywhere, with an husband who is M.I.C.E., an F.R.G.S., and—and other horrid things. At intervals there will come lectures on wifely obedience from the mater, and oh, you can take it from me, however often you may hear it quoted to the contrary, that there is no *happy* marriage possible in this world without love."

Niels Barton rose and ground his heel into the polished surface of the deck.

"Miss Armstrong, I thank you for your trust in me. I cannot help you in this, but if at any time I can, promise that you will let me know."

She gave it with a tremor in her voice, and he caught the words "I'll try—try and be worthy of his and of your good opinion" before she fluttered like a bird down the companion way and into her own room.

So Niels Barton concluded that he had grave reasons for his seriousness.

II.

And each for the joy of the working, and each in his separate star,
Shall draw the thing as he sees it, for the God of things as they are.
L'Envoi (Kipling).

He had refilled his pipe, and renewed his pacing once more, when Thornburgh again appeared with a very different expression from the one he had worn an hour since.

"May I come in, Barton?"

"Why, of course you may! I'm on my second pipe already. Light up, if you've come for a yarn; there's an hour yet before I need dress for dinner. It's part of your luck to get out of that ordeal."

With that fineness of sympathy and tact generally supposed to be the attribute of the so-called gentler sex, but more often found in the sterner, Barton ignored his friend's white face and proceeded to search diligently for something he did not want in a drawer.

Thornburgh had deposited his well-set frame on the edge of Niel's bunk, and, as he finished speaking, he lifted his handsome face from his hands.

"Barton, old chap, that globe-trotting idiot, who hasn't succeeded in engrossing all Miss Armstrong's attention this voyage, has had the impudence to corner me in the reading room and inform me that it is my doing; and insulted me by saying it was not likely that Miss Armstrong would look at a beggar of an engineer with only his pay. As if any but a born idiot expected her to! I suppose one may be permitted to view the Promised Land, even though one may not be of the elect. I retorted that it was not likely she would look at a globe-trotting American, even accompanied by the almighty dollar, in any light but that of a curiosity, seeing she is going to Sydney to be married; but, perhaps, you don't keep the eighth commandment yourself, I added; I don't need any reminder, thanks; and with that I left him."

Barton smiled.

"He's in perfectly safe hands there, Thornburgh; but—but I'm afraid, old fellow, you're rather hard hit!"

"Pretty bad, Barton, thanks, but it's all in the day's work, you know. Of course, she doesn't suspect it. She'd never believe I'd the impudence to fall in love with her: and even if I were cad enough to let her know, why, what hope would there ever be of her ever caring for me? No, Barton, things are best as they are. She'll never know, and she may be happy if the man isn't a brute, which, please God, he isn't."

Niels gripped his hand. He was facing it so like a man that he would not make it worse for him by telling him what he knew. He would tell him after; perhaps she would leave some token for him to give him.

Twelve more restless hours for at least three on board the *Trebizond* and then she steamed slowly up past the creeks and inlets flanked by orange grooves and gum trees of the most beautiful harbour in the world. The sun shon out over its waste of waters, blue and still, in unconscious irony at least to those same three.

Thornburgh, who was on duty, kept religiously in the background. There was no good to be gained by a good-bye either for the Governor's daughter or for himself, so Barton was the last to see the "belle of the *Trebizond*."

He had been helping her to collect her music in the music room, and, as he rose with the heap in his arms, where she had placed it, to follow her, she turned and lifted her pitiful, fair, little face to his, and Niels Barton, with an impulse he could not resist, still less explain, turned and kissed her. She seemed to be asking to be comforted, and it was all he could do.

A week later a sorry little note arrived for him from the "Gresham." They were to be married from that hotel. It ran:

My Friend,

The only one who has told me the truth for the truth's sake—let me thank you for all your goodness to me. Remember your promise, and—forgive me. I am very weak, I know, but I am so lonely. I love Hugh Thornburgh more than life itself.

Have some pity for your poor little friend,

Cherith.

* * * * *

And did they run away these two lovers, as the up-to-date novelette would lead us to suppose? No; it was all very commonplace, and so like life, and we do not even know whether the unhappy couple lived unhappily ever after.

Edna S. Gamble.

(The Sequel will Appear Next Week.)

Digitized by Google

The Queen of Music Boxes.

Messrs. Nicole Freres'

REGINA AND POLYPHON Musical Boxes.

PLAY YOUR OWN SELECTION OF MUSIC.

These boxes render on steel combs the most exquisite music, with a compass and volume of tone equal to that of a piano. As a social entertainer they are unrivalled, **playing over 1,000 different tunes,** including all the latest popular music, as well as classical and operatic selections. With one winding run 20 to 30 minutes. The tune sheets are of metal and practically indestructible, while the mechanism is solid yet simple. Handsome cases.

SPECIAL LINES:

INFANTA, GENEVA, GORDON, HAVELOCK	Polyphon, with 6 Tunes,	32s., 60s., 80s., 115s.,	extra Tunes, 5d. ,, 8d. ,, 4d. ,, 1s. 4d. ,, 1s. 8d.
REGINA No. 20,	,,	160s.,	,, 2s. 0d.

All Prices, from 16/6 to 100 Guineas.

All Dealers, or Illustrated No. 3 Catalogue Free to Readers of "SHORT STORIES."

NICOLE FRERES Ltd. (Dept. 3)

21 ELY PLACE, HOLBORN, LONDON, E.C. Established 1815.

VARICOCELE.

Every man suffering from Varicocele and the allied troubles, or Varicose Veins, should send for treatise, describing their Causes, Symptoms, Results, and Successful and Painless Treatment without surgical operation or the use of cumbersome trusses and electrical appliances. Will be sent sealed, post free.

S. S. MURRAY,
7 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK

Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.

INVESTED FUNDS £10,000,000.

The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*

PYN-KA

THE WONDERFUL
METAL POLISHER

The Lustre Lasts!
Pyn-Ka Leaves no Scratches!

Cleans and burnishes gold, silver, plate, copper, brass, nickel, tin, glass, etc., better, quicker, and at less cost of labour and money than any other polish known.

Paste or tablets, 1d. to 6d. All dealers.

THE
ELECTROPATHIC BELT
CONSTIPATION.

Rev. D. Sutcliffe, Vicar of Holme, Burnley, Lancashire, writes:—"*My health has improved very satisfactorily, and I am now entirely free from the constipation I used to suffer from so severely.*"

Speedily cures all Disorders of the **Nerves, Stomach, Liver, and Kidneys.** Thousands of Testimonials. **Pamphlet & Advice free on application to Medical Battery Co., Ld.**

489, OXFORD ST., LONDON, W.

Call to-day, or write at once.

A SUM of from 12s. to 25s. per week can be earned in spare hours or evenings by either sex everywhere.—Send addressed envelope for particulars to Box 24, Eclipse Works, 92A Aldersgate Street, London.

£20

Hairdressers fitted up. Estimates free.

Tobacconists Commencing. See Illd. Guide (259 pages) 3d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000 **Tobacconists Outfitting Co.,** 186, Euston Road, London. The largest and original house (50 years reputation. Mgr., H. Myers

PASTIMES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE
OF
SPORT & ADVENTURE

KEATING'S LOZENGES

THERE IS NO BETTER REMEDY IN THE WHOLE WORLD FOR ALL COUCH AND THROAT TROUBLES THAN KEATING'S LOZENGES. ONE GIVES RELIEF. THEY WILL CURE, AND THEY WILL NOT INJURE YOUR HEALTH. THEY CONTAIN ONLY THE PUREST DRUGS.

Sold everywhere in 1/1½ Tins.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.,** Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.

Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for **ONE MONTH'S TRIAL.** Balance can be paid **5/- Monthly.** Call or write for designs and Samples of work.

39/-

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO.,
188B High St., Camden Town, London, N.W.;
63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

ZOX

CURES

NEURALGIA

Toothache, Headache, Sciatica, and all Nerve Pains.

PURE, HARMLESS, AND NON-APERIENT.

Do not be persuaded to take a substitute, there is nothing as good as **ZOX.**

Of all Chemists, 1s. and 2s. 6d. per Box.

ZOX Co., 11 Hatton Garden, E.C.

PIANOS. UPRIGHT IRON GRAND.

Complete Iron frame, Brass Pin Plate, Nickel-bolted Wrest Plank, Check Action, Full Trichord, Full Compass, Rivetted Hammers, Handsome Walnut Case, Inlaid Marqueterie Panel, Sconces, Trusses, etc. Tone and touch perfect. Guaranteed 25 years. 28 guineas, at 10/6 per month. Delivered free on payment of 10/6. Approval. Catalogues Free.

ORGANS. GENUINE AMERICAN.

Imported Direct. Solid Walnut Case, Mirror Top, Music Case, 2 Knee Swells, Mouse and Dust Proof, 8 Stops, 3 Sets of Reeds, 14 Guineas, at 6/- per month. 10 Stops, 3 Sets of Reeds, 2 Octave Couplers. 15 guineas, at 7/- per month. Illustrated Lists Free. Kindly mention this paper.

THE LONDON AND LIVERPOOL PIANOFORTE CO.,
Granby St. & Selborne St., LIVERPOOL.
Agents wanted where not represented.

Digitized by Google

YOU AND I.

Slum.—Berlin may be called a city without slums. There are districts in the north and east of the city where the poor live, but they are better housed than in most large cities; there are no alleys and courts, such as we know in London, for instance, and there is an absence of that misery and squalor that seems to chill us when we penetrate the poorer neighbourhoods here.

Court.—Sir H. Halford, M.D., was Court physician to four Sovereigns, namely, George III., George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria. This is the only instance of the kind. He died in 1844.

M. E.—The natives of Easter Island, in the Pacific Ocean, had a curious custom, according to which their king was chosen. There was a legend to the effect that many years ago there was a good king, who used to collect the eggs of the seabirds. When he was old he did not die, but turned into a butterfly. The natives thought so much of him they could not decide which chief should succeed him. At last they determined that the one who collected the largest number of eggs within a certain time would be most like the old man, and from that time the appointment of king was decided in that way.

G. P.—No, the Danish flag, strictly speaking, is the oldest. It is a white cross on a red ground, and the adoption of this—the Danebrog—flag as the national standard of the Danish army dates from the victory won at Reval in 1219 by Valdemar II. It was at that time that the Northern Kingdom reached the highest point in its history. There is a traditional legend to the effect that the flag descended ready-made from Heaven in answer to Valdemar's prayer as he was leading his troops to battle.

F. A. G. asks: "Can a snake poison a snake?"——Reptiles are never affected by a bite from one of their own species; the common viper does not die from a bite from one of its own kind; the bite of the hooded snake, however, would probably be fatal to it.

H. B.—The best of the transparent soaps are made by dissolving ordinary soap in alcohol and then distilling it off again; otherwise they do not differ in constitution from the best primrose. English soaps are undoubtedly the best in the world. Continental soap is quite inferior, being less carefully made, and principally from oils instead of fats. It contains more soda and is irritating, although it makes up into more showy-looking toilet articles.

Q. W.—The first Quaker, and the founder of the sect in England, was George Fox, who flourished in the middle of the seventeenth century. There are, at least, two stories of the origin of the name "Quaker." One is that it was given to them because they made people tremble at the word of the Lord, and the other that they were so called owing to their gesticulation and shaking while preaching.

L. M. S. asks: "What is the idea in firing guns as a salute to any illustrious stranger visiting our shores?"——To show the visitor that he or she, as the case may be, is regarded as a friend, and that, therefore, it is unnecessary to keep the guns loaded as if an enemy were in the vicinity.

W. B.—Sovereigns were first issued in the reign of Henry VIII., and was so called because His Majesty in Royal robes was represented upon them.

J.—Railway travelling in Russia promises to become more agreeable than it has hitherto been. The companies have been smitten with a surprising desire for improvement; they are about to establish free libraries on the trains. If, during your stay in the country, you have to make a journey from Moscow to Sebastopol, you will be provided with literature—if you understand Russian.

R. H.—The largest statue ever made was the Colossus of Rhodes, the next largest being the statue of Bavaria, erected by Louis I., King of Bavaria.

D. R.—A tomb-dance is performed at St. Ives, Cornwall, by ten girls every fifth year. A Mr. Kaill, who died in 1811, left a sum of money to defray the expenses of ten girls of ten years of age who should dance for a quarter of an hour in the morning on a plot of land adjoining his mausoleum. They were to be dressed in white and have their hair elaborately curled and frizzed. A fiddler plays the music, and two elderly widows also receive a substantial gratuity for acting as witnesses.

G. M.—The Royal yachts are the property of the nation, not of the Queen personally.

W. H.—Windmills are in great request in European Russia, and there is money to be made by anyone who pushes on the trade of windmill machinery there. The country is flat and windy, and the people, backward as they are, seem to realise that the wind may be made to do something for the good of the community.

T.—I find that 1,000 tons of sugar are used every day in this United Kingdom in connection with tea drinking.

Mar.—You are quite right; in former times marriages were prohibited in this country during certain seasons. These were periods connected with religious festivals, as from "Advent Sunday to the octave of the Epiphany." In an almanack for 1678, the information is given that "marriage comes in on the 18th of January, and goes out on Septuagesima Sunday," and the like.

I. T.—In 1799, when the income-tax in its present form first came into operation, the rate was two shillings in the pound; it realised £6,000,000. Last year, with a rate one-third that amount, the tax brought rather more than £18,000,000. The tax was repealed. In 1842 it was re-imposed, and has stayed with us since without intermission. Not many persons will celebrate that centenary.

Monarch.—Of the seven Presidents of France (including the newly chosen one) who have been called to the head of affairs during the existence of the present French Republic, only one has been unanimously elected. That distinction was granted to M. Thiers, whose great services to his country was thus fittingly recognised.

X. I.—The greatest lady explorer of the present day is Miss Mary Kingsley, whose travels in West Africa astonished every well-seasoned male explorer about three years ago. The object of her journeyings was research into the social manners, folk-lore and customs of the natives; she visited some of the fiercest cannibal tribes of the interior, and collected many valuable objects, many of which are in the British Museum.

R. H.—Your friend is quite right. The word "Pup," properly speaking, should not refer to a little dog, but a little boy or girl. A little dog is so called because it is a pet.

SHORT STORIES' ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
Double ,, ,,	1 0 0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10 0 0
Half-page ,, ,, ,, ...	5 0 0
Quarter-page ,, ,, ...	2 10 0
Eighth-page ,, ,, ...	1 5 0
Front page, whole ,, ,, ...	12 10 0
,, half	6 5 0

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, March **14th**, if intended for the Issue on sale March **28th**, and dated April **1st**. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed and Published by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

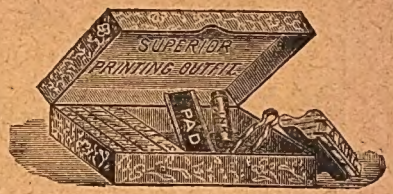
SUPERIOR PRINTING OUTFITS

For 1/2, 2/3, 2/8, 3/4, 3/9 and 6/9, post free.

Consisting of Letters, Points, and Ornaments, a Type-Holder, supply of Ink, Pad, and Tweezers. Any name, &c., can be made at pleasure, for stamping Books, Papers, and Printing Cards.

ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE FREE.

Agents wanted for the Sale of Patent "Air Cushion" Rubber Stamps and Type.



The "Mignon" Dating Stamp.

COMPLETE IN BOX, WITH PAD AND INK.

Price 2s. post free.

Indispensable for Receipting Bills, for Dating Correspondence Papers, etc.

FUN FOR THE MILLION!

THE "HARLEQUINADE" SET

OF

SIX COMICAL RUBBER STAMPS.

Same Size of Drawings with Self Inking Pad.

Endless Variety of Mirth-Provoking Pictures can be produced.

Price, all complete, **2/6** only. Postage, 2d. extra.

THE

Flux Stylographic Pen

TRADE MARK.

embraces all the good points necessary in a Good Pen, and is as near Perfection as Skill and Long Experience can make it.

IT IS PRACTICALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE, BEING MADE EXCLUSIVELY OF NON-CORROSIVE SUBSTANCES, VIZ., COLD AND VULCANITE. IT IS FITTED WITH OSCILLATING NEEDLE, THE USE OF WHICH ENABLES THE WRITER TO HOLD THE PEN AT ANY ANGLE.

3/= The Cheapest Pen for Universal Use.
Each Pen supplied in Box with Filler and full Directions for Use.
will be sent Free. Postage 1d. each; if "Registered," 3d. extra.

No. 500.—Plain Polished Vulcanite, each, 3s.
For FOUNTAIN PENS refer to Illustrated List, which

Agents Wanted. Illustrated Lists Free.

M. LINDNER, Patentee, Manufacturer, and Importer, 170 Fleet St., London, E.C.

100 PACKETS showy Flower Seeds, **1/6**; unequalled anywhere.
DANIEL STONE, LOUDWATER, BUCKS.

FOR LADIES AND CENTLEMEN.

JUNO CYCLES

ARE THE VERY BEST AND MOST UP-TO-DATE.

Carriage Paid. Cash Discount.

Write for New Season's List.

JUNO Cycles and Accessories sent Post Free.

LISTS POST FREE

Juno No. 4, £10 10s. 17/6 monthly.

	Monthly		Monthly		Monthly
£10 ...	16/8	£12 ...	20/-	£14 14s. ...	24/6
£10 10s. ...	17/6	£12 12s. ...	21/-	£15 15s. ...	26/3

METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS' CO. Ltd.,
Juno Cycle School & Works, 75, 76, Bishopsgate Street, Without, E.C., and Piccadilly Circus, London, W.

Typewriters, £9 9s. 15s. 9d. Monthly.

ROYAL MAGAZINE

Published on 22nd of each month.

3d.

COMFORT, CLEANLINESS AND CURE

FOLLOW THE USE OF

Dr. PAUL'S WHITE PILE OINTMENT.

Gives ease at once and effectually removes Piles, Cracks, Fissures and Ulcerations.
In boxes 1/- & 2/6 each. Post free 1/2 & 2/9

PENN & CO., 89, BLACKFRIARS ROAD, LONDON, S.E.

SAVE HALF YOUR BUTCHERS' BILLS and BUY from our DIRECT SUPPLY STORES. Orders of 4s. free delivered. Terms, cash on delivery. Orders posted before five p.m. delivered next day everywhere.

MUTTON.—Loins and saddles, 6½d.; shoulders, 6d.
MUTTON.—Legs, 8d.; necks, 5d.
LAMB.—Hind-quarter (9lb.), 8d.; fore-quarter (9lb.), 6½d.
BEEF.—Topside, 7½d.; silverside, 7d.; sirloin and ribs, 8d.
BEEF.—Suet, 4d.; gravy beef, 4d.; brisket, 4½d.
BEEF.—Rumpsteak, 11d.; beefsteak, 8d.; salt silverside, 7d.
VEAL and PORK equally low prices.

The ENGLISH FARMERS' ASSOCIATION (Limited), 6 Holborn Circus, London, E.C.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

ASK FOR & INSIST ON HAVING
HARRIS'
DELICIOUS & ABSOLUTELY PURE
MADE ONLY BY HARRIS AND CO.
GOLD MEDAL
BERMONDSEY CAKE FACTORY, LONDON, W.
OF STORES & GROCERS EVERYWHERE
CAKES
APPLICATIONS FOR SOLE AGENCIES INVITED

'DOLLY' BLUE

Notice.—"DOLLY" Blue is neatly tied in a white bag to a small handle to hold by whilst using. It is the cheapest and best Laundry Blue in the market. "Dolly" Blue is sold by all Grocers and Oilmen at 1d. per bag.

IMPORTANT.—The public are cautioned against attempts which may be made to supply other Blue, Tints, and Dyes than those of Messrs. W. Edge and Sons Ltd., when "Dolly" Blue, "Dolly" Tints, and "Dolly" Dyes are ordered.

The Dolly Specialities are manufactured by
W. EDGE & SONS LIMITED, BOLTON, LANCS.

LYLE'S
GOLDEN
SYRUP
LONGEST ESTABLISHED, PUREST & BEST.

HALL'S
COCA
PELLETS

TRIAL
SAMPLES
GRATIS.

PREVENT FATIGUE from
WALKING
TRAVELLING
STUDY
CYCLING
SINGING
SICK NURSING
BUSINESS WORRIES
&c., &c.

CURE
SLEEPLESSNESS
BRAIN FAG
NERVOUSNESS
NEURALGIA
DESPONDENCY
EXHAUSTION
MENTAL STRAIN
&c., &c.

SEND POSTCARD FOR A FREE SAMPLE.

PRICES:
1/2, 2/11,
4/9, &
11/3
POST FREE.

SOLE MAKERS:
GILBERT & HALL,
CHEMISTS,
BOURNEMOUTH

RED WHITE AND BLUE
SOLD EVERYWHERE
FRENCH COFFEE
DELICIOUS FOR BREAKFAST OR AFTER DINNER.

ZEBRA
Grate Polish.
In Packets or as a Paste in Tins.